

The Idea of Iran Vol. 8



IRAN AFTER THE MONGOLS

Edited by **Sussan Babaie**

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Iran After the Mongols

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Iran After the Mongols

The Idea of Iran

Volume VIII

Edited By

Sussan Babaie

(The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London)

in association with The London Middle East Institute at SOAS

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30, Ilkhanid dynasty in Greater Iran and Iraq; The Courtauld Gallery of Art.
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Before this volume went into print, we lost Leonard Lewisohn, our distinguished colleague, scholar of Persian poetry and Sufism. I wish to remember him here, as well for his kindness and generosity.

Introduction

Sussan Babaie

(The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London)

This book is the eighth in the *Idea of Iran* series – a monumental undertaking launched in 2010, sponsored by the Soudavar Memorial Foundation. This volume is the result of two symposia held in 2014 and 2016 at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, under the auspices of the London Middle East Institute. The integration of the essays from the two symposia into one volume has produced an assembly of scholarly reflections from a variety of disciplines: history, history of art and architecture, literature and Sufism. It also represents a range of viewpoints, ranging from chapters with a broad historical sweep to those examining single texts, objects and personalities. Taken together, these twelve essays open new vistas onto the transformative impact on West Asia – indeed on the entire known world in Afro-Eurasia – of the Mongol invasions of the first half of the thirteenth century.

In 1258, Hülegü (1256–65), the grandson of Chinggis Khan, placed Baghdad under siege, leading to the conquest of the centre of the Islamic empire and the collapse of the Abbasid caliphal hegemony (750–1258). In effect, this was now a pan-Asian empire, placing lands from Russia and Syria to China under the tutelage of a Mongol Khanate. Although a shocking blow to the notion of an Islamic caliphal empire, the disintegration of the Abbasids was already underway. Competing centres of caliphal authority had been established in Egypt-Syria and in Andalusia since the tenth century. In the east, however, the caliphs remained the titular authority, even though political authority was the purview of powerful clans and dynasties – subjects already covered in the preceding volumes in this series. While the Mongol impact may seem less consequential from the point of view of Western Islamic lands, the collapse of Abbasid hegemony set in motion profound transformations in the historical trajectory of Islamic West Asia. The Mongol polities that followed Hülegü's conquests in Western Asia were no longer obliged by tradition to seek caliphal legitimation, thus releasing a model of sovereignty that was a composite of the Iranian, Turco-Mongol and Islamic models of kingship.

This volume traces representations of the complex frameworks that articulated, freshly and more powerfully than any moment in the history of Greater Iran since the Arab invasions in the seventh century, the reinterpretation and reinstatement of Iranian cultural identities across a vast

region. Chief among the post-Mongol polities was the Ilkhanate in Greater Iran, Iraq, Anatolia and the Caucasus during whose relatively short reign (1256–1335) left behind the indelible mark of what becomes a Persianate culture in the following centuries.

The Persian language, already dominant in literary spheres, gained unprecedented currency also for administrative, historical and scientific writing. *Jame' al-tavarikh*, written in Persian and Arabic, was composed by the great vizier Rashid al-Din of Hamadan, and situated the Mongol ruling elite within a universal, Eurasian history centred on its Persianate homeland and reaching into Biblical, Quranic, Iranian, Chinese and Mongolian imaginaries of shared pasts. Buildings, including the urban developments in Tabriz and Sultaniyya, and manuscripts, especially copies of the *Shahnameh* ('Book of Kings'), were produced for princely patrons who aspired to claim the Iranian crown of kingship.

The contributors to this volume investigate the immediate effects of Mongol rule during the Ilkhanid period, but also explore the fourteenth century in its own right as a period of the emergence of local Iranian dynasties in the face of continuing Mongol prestige following the collapse of the Ilkhanid dynasty, and the development of alternative models of authority. By the middle of the 1330s, the Ilkhanate in Greater Iran had been replaced by regional successor polities, making room for a multiplicity of cultural, political and religious arenas with their own regional centres. The most prominent among these local polities were the Jalayerids, Muzaffarids, Sarbadars and Karts.

This period also witnessed the expansion of the princely patronage of large building projects beyond the political centres of the Ilkhans, including Yazd and Kerman. Luxury manuscript copies of the *Shahnameh* and its imitations also found patronage, as well as extraordinary copies of the Qur'an and other objects of luxury. Several of the greatest Persian poets, including Khwaju Kermani (d. 1341 or 1352), Ubayd-i Zakani (d. 1371) and Hafiz (d. 1389), and major historians such as Hamdullah Mustawfi (c. 1335), Mu'in al-Din Yazdi (c. 1356) and Nezam al-Din Shami (c. 1404) were active during this period.

In the realm of intellectual history, the fourteenth century was extremely important. Such major theologians as 'Adud al-Din al-Iji (d. 1355), Sa'd al-Din Taftazani (d. 1390) and Sayyid Sharif Jurjani (d. 1413) were active. Among the prominent Sufi figures, eponyms of important sociopolitical movements and Sufi *tariqas*, were Baha al-Din Naqshband (d. 1389), Fazl Allah Astarabadi (d. 1394) and Shah Ne'mat Allah Vali (d. 1430). The period saw the rise and consolidation of distinct Sufi groups with their origins in the thirteenth century: the Mawlawiyyeh, Kubrawiyyeh and Safaviyyeh.

The richness and cultural complexities involved in reinventing the idea of Iran during this period draw attention to aspects of the representation of cultural longevity and fluid transformations. The Idea of Iran emerges from the

intersections between these new constellations of the competing cultural, political and religious aspirations in the post-Mongol world.

This creative synthesis of seemingly incompatible, even contradictory cultural inclinations in the post-Mongol period is made tangible by the Courtauld Bag, reproduced on the cover of this volume.¹ This is an extraordinarily intriguing object: a brass-lidded container inlaid in gold and silver, made for a woman of high social rank, to be held for her by an attendant. It would presumably have contained personal items – a kerchief or a perfume box perhaps – although there is no way for us to know. It was made in Mosul, a city in present-day northern Iraq where, from early in the thirteenth century, high-quality and distinctive inlaid metal objects were made. It does not bear any signatory marks or a date, but comparisons demonstrate its stylistic and manufacturing features to be of the Mosul variety. The epigraphic band on the depressed zone of the rectangular lid also points to standard phrases praising a noble person.

Every detail on this bag harks back to the technologies and visual preferences that had been part of the repertoire of Islamic arts – the dense geometric patterns, the stylised and standardised figures of the seated prince, the hunter, the musician, the cup-bearer. The exception – and this is truly exceptional – is the rectangular band inlaid, engraved and densely composed, with figures posed to focus their attention towards a central seated personage. There is indeed a specific scene depicted here: attendants in a variety of headgear, some of which is distinctly Mongol in style, each holding an instrument of a courtly task – a bird of prey, a fan, a bottle. One figure on the left holds a pouring vessel, into which he has presumably poured libations out of the large bottles on a table, while a kneeling man just in front him – sporting a strangely sombrero-like hat – offers a cup to yet another figure. This last one, just to the left of the central axis of the image, half-kneeling before a figure larger than the rest, is seemingly corpulent and female. That she is a she, seated on a Chinese-style bench shared with the man to the left, is surmised mainly from comparisons with depictions on paper, in album drawings and manuscript paintings. She is in other words the object of the court scene's attention as well as the viewer's. Clues to details about the bag – its owner, the status of the owner, the bag's function and the context for the use of such an object – are discernible from this very festive and bibulous scene. This is a prestige item made for a high-ranking female member of the Ilkhanid court – a *khatun* – and carried alongside her by an attendant. That the scene is produced using means other than the standard formulae available to metalworkers, who were skilled at making the familiar designs of seated musicians or hunters on horseback, becomes clear when it is compared to paintings that graced the newly popularised and widely disseminated copies of the Ilkhanid manuscripts of the *Shahnameh*.² The point to underscore here is the rise to prominence of the *Shahnameh* as a source for ideas about kingship and authority, and a signal of

the longevity of the idea of Iran so amply represented through such sources, and so tightly intertwined with a new present that had become inseparable from the Ilkhanid alliances with their East Asian kin.

The erudite essays in this volume make use of numerous such representations of the survivals and revivals of the notion of Iran, or *Eran* – a reference to *Eranshahr*.³

Note on Transliteration

Despite all efforts, the chapters in this volume may vary in the transliteration of Persian and Arabic words. Some have done away entirely with the use of the diacritical marks; others have followed the IJMES system, more or less. This, I felt, was justified as in some instances the need for proper reading of transcribed poetic lines requires full-scale transliteration while in others the absence of the diacriticals can be tolerated. Nevertheless, we have tried to keep to the common usage of Anglicised terms and names – Isfahan not Esfahan – and to standardise oft-used words in the chapters, such as the *Shahnameh*.

Notes:

1. The bag, formerly labelled a wallet, was the subject of a highly praised exhibition in 2014 at the Courtauld Gallery of Art in London. It was guest-curated by Rachel Ward, and was accompanied by a handsome publication. See Rachel Ward, ed., *Court and Craft: A Masterpiece from Northern Iraq* (London: Paul Holberton, 2014).
2. Mariana Shreve Simpson, who presented a paper at the symposium in 2016 but was unable to contribute to the volume, was the first to have studied the large-scale Ilkhanid production of small illustrated copies of the *Shahnameh*. See her seminal dissertation, Harvard University, published as *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts* (New York: Garland, 1979). See also Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
3. Among the earliest full considerations of the subject is Gherardo Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on Its Origin* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989). See also the earlier volumes in this series.

The Idea of Iran

George Lane
(SOAS, London)

In some ways, the idea of Iran had been put to uneasy sleep with the fall of the Sasanian Empire and the domination of the region by the Arabs in the seventh century. Iran had ceased to exist as a recognised, functioning polity when the Arab armies of the nascent Islamic State had rolled across the Persian heartlands. The Arab conquerors were well aware of the deep sense of cultural unity and shared heritage that the peoples of the Iranian plateau had enjoyed for centuries. Persian language and culture had spread across and united the lands over which the Sasanians held sway, and the religion of Zoroaster provided the weft to their political warp. As Iran's political structures began to crumble and its already fatally weakened armies collapsed, fervent and inspired Muslim Arab commanders established strategic garrison towns and re-drew the vast expanse of mountains, deserts, valleys, rivers and steppes as a mosaic of mini states and rival polities. For over six hundred years, the idea of Iran was forgotten: instead, Khorasanis pitted their forces against Jabalis; Sistan rose up against its western neighbours; Azerbaijan guarded its borders against the Kurds; and the banner of Persian nationalism fell to the widely distrusted and feared Nizari Assassins, whose forces were headquartered in Alamut.¹ Iran persisted as a collection of independent states until the armies of Hülegü Khan (d. 1265) marched across the Oxus from out of the East circa 1254, within four years of which Möngke (d. 1259), grandson of Chinggis Khan and younger brother of the Great Khan, had established the Ilkhanate, a powerful polity whose heartlands form the basis of the modern state of Iran.

After the Chinggisid Khan had swept triumphantly across Iran to claim the lands between the Oxus and the Nile as his kingdom, the official histories of the time, both within and without the Ilkhanate, began to refer to the new state as Iran or Iranzamīn ('land of Iran') and its peoples as Iranians, whereas previously the region had been referred to by its individual provinces, such as Sistan, Khorasan, al-Jabal, Fars and Azerbaijan. Hülegü's vast army had marched right across Asia at an easy pace. From their first appearance in Turkestan, the newcomers had been greeted by a procession of local kings, rulers, princes and assorted dignitaries. All were anxious to pledge allegiance and loyalty to their promised sovereign and many to ride with the triumphant king who had come to claim the lands of Iran as his own.²

Iran had endured three long decades of anarchy and debilitating insecurity, beginning in circa 1220 with the devastation caused by the first irruption of the Chinggisid armies, who had wreaked murderous revenge on Khwarazm, Khorasan, northern Iran and the Caucasus for the unprovoked massacre of Chinggis Khan's two trade envoys on the orders of the deluded, self-aggrandising Khwārazmshāh.

The envoys, who represented Chinggis Khan and had come offering peace and trade, had been mainly made up of Muslim merchants from eastern Turkestan, a region that had only recently been assimilated into the expanding multicultural, multi-ethnic Chinggisid Empire. The people of eastern Turkestan had welcomed the arrival of the Chinggisid armies after Jebe Noyan (d. 1225) had liberated the land from the oppressive rule of the cruelly anti-Muslim Kuchlug Khan, a Naiman prince and ally of the duplicitous Khwārazmshāh. The Mongols 'permitted the recitation of the *takbir* and the *azan*', which, for these eastern Muslims, represented 'one of the mercies of the Lord and ... bounties of divine grace'.³ By assimilating with the Chinggisids, these former subjects of the Qara Khitai⁴ had hoped to profit from their newly acquired Mongol contacts by exploiting the rich markets in the East that would now be open to them. The murderous reception they subsequently received from their neighbours and fellow Muslims in the West was both unexpected and undeserved and the Khwārazmshāh must bear responsibility for the predictable consequences.

The devastation caused by Chinggis Khan's dreadful revenge plunged Iran into a kind of limbo: an unwelcome, fragile peace under military rule in which the country became the playground of a variety of armed elements, among whom 'leapt' the infamous Khwarazmian brigands of Jalāl al-Dīn Mingebirdi,⁵ roving bands of 'Assassins' (Ismailis), opportunistic Arab raiding parties and destabilising bandit armies of Kurds and Lurs, all of whom conspired to render Iran a dangerous and lawless land despite the presence of the Mongol military force who were, at best, impotent to pacify the turbulent land under their charge.

The situation in the northern capital of Qazvin – which, due to its proximity to Alamut, had been chosen as the headquarters of the Ismaili leader, Rukn al-Dīn Gurshah – was particularly precarious. The city's Sunni population were reputedly subjected to such frequent night-time raids by plundering 'Assassins' that when news of Möngke Khan's coronation filtered back to their leaders, they acted decisively, dispatching an embassy to the Qa'an's royal court. Qazvin had already experienced the devastation caused by Chinggisid wrath when Jebe Noyan and Subodai Noyan had passed through the town at the start of their infamous Caspian sojourn.

In heaps on every side the corpses lay,
Alike on lonely path and broad highway.

Uncounted bodies cumbered every street;
 Scarce might one find a place to set one's feet.

In terror of the Mongol soldiery
 Hither and thither did the people fly,

.....

The ruthless Mongols burning braids did ply,
 Till tongues of flame leapt upwards to the sky.
 Roof, vault and arch in burning ruins fell,
 A heathen holocaust of Death and Hell.⁶

However, the people of Qazvin subsequently experienced the Mongols' benign patronage, once the Chinggisid elite had settled in the city and begun to enjoy its attractions, including its proximity to the Azerbaijani steppe lands, its hammams and its scholars. Scholars from the Iftikhāriyān family – many of whom were later to become so prominent in the Ilkhanate state – had been selected to school the young Chinggisid princes, including Möngke Khan and his brothers.⁷ It was on the strength of these early contacts that the notables of Qazvin despatched a delegation to petition Möngke Khan to rescue both their city and their country of Iran.

The people of Qazvin believed in the Chinggisid khans' ability to bring peace and security to their troubled land for a number of reasons – including the inhabitants' own desperation. Iranians clung to the myth of their illustrious past and their ultimate triumph over Turan. History had taught them that assimilating one's adversaries was often more effective than defeating them on the battlefield. They also remembered the Turco-Mongol Qara Khitai, who, with the caliph of Baghdad's blessing, had long acted as a 'wall' against infidel infiltration from outside the Dār al-Islām, and whose former subjects – including Muslims – had now assumed positions of power and influence within the growing Chinggisid Empire. The wise rulers of Qazvin knew they had two options. They could passively accept the inevitable and endure another Chinggisid invasion, one possibly sympathetic to the Ismaili cause. Or they could welcome such an incursion and use it to their advantage, especially since they had already established contacts with the Great Khan and his illustrious brothers.

The wise men of Qazvin knew that Persian traders, adventurers and opportunists, as well as second-generation Muslims, the descendants of the forced migration and population movements of the 1220s and earlier, were now reaping the benefits of imperial expansion and the rewards of loyal service and adaptability. While their homeland economy stagnated, and their people cowered behind the bolted gates of their isolated and threatened city-states, expatriate Persians in the East thrived amid the growing prosperity of the east and even former army officers of the Khwārazmshāh found governorships and

administrative and military posts in an empire thirsty for bureaucrats and artisans and hungry for skills and expertise of any kind.⁸

Though the delegation to Möngke's court is mentioned in many of the time's rich sources, Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī (1300–55) has provided the most detailed description of events at Möngke's court when the delegation was admitted. A son of Qazvin with family links to the city's elite, an important administrator during the later Ilkhanate, and a serious historian of his time, Mustawfī Qazvīnī is a credible commentator, since his own relatives were present when the Qazvini envoy requested that Möngke Khan 'build a bridge across the Amu Darya, over which the caravans might pass'.⁹ In response to the khan's less than enthusiastic answer, the eloquent Qazvini spokesman elaborated that he was referring to the construction of a 'bridge of justice', and that what he sought was direct rule from the khan's court and the appointment of a royal prince to rule over Iran. The delegation was requesting to be fully absorbed into the Chinggisid Empire, so they could experience all the benefits of imperial rule, thus putting an end to their neglected, peripheral status. They also specifically requested that Möngke deal with the scourge of terrorism threatening not only Iranian cities but even Möngke's own court, at which point, as if on cue, the Qādī al-Quzzat (chief judge) of Qazvin, leader of the delegation, surveyed those present in the audience before the khan and pointed out a figure whom he revealed to be an Ismaili *fedā'ī* in disguise, a terrorist at the very heart of the Chinggisid imperial court. According to Mustawfī Qazvīnī's forgivably fanciful account, a shocked but grateful Great Khan immediately ordered the mobilisation of his troops to deal with the fearsome threat of terrorism, calling on the Qādī to choose a suitable candidate to lead his massive army. The Qādī, of course, singled out Hülegü, a choice the Great Khan could not better, since he could see that Hülegü possessed the requisite *farr* [majesty, grandeur, regal bearing] for such an office. Though we might question some of the details, the essence of Mustawfī Qazvīnī's account¹⁰ is credible and has been endorsed by a number of independent sources. The Qazvini delegation was simply attempting to pre-empt the inevitable and retain some semblance of control over events, while also ensuring that the Ismailis, their political adversaries, spiritual nemeses and possible ideological and economic rivals, would be thwarted.

Some years later, Atā Malik Juwaynī expressed the views of many of his compatriots as he surveyed the ruins of the Ismaili headquarters at Alamut. Musing on the advent of Hülegü Khan and the rise of Möngke, he explained that 'God's secret intent'¹¹ had caused those events to unfold. For Juwaynī, a devout Sunni and loyal servant of Hülegü and the Ilkhanate, the triumph of the Chinggisids – and the Toluids in particular – had resulted in three blessings: first, the destruction and near annihilation of that insult to the divine, the Ismailis; second, as Islamic tradition had foreseen, Islam and thriving Muslim communities had spread 'even unto China'; and, third, power had been

indirectly delivered into the hands of Muslim men such as he, to whom God had presented 'the keys to the lands of the world ... ready for use in the hands of the [Mongols'] power [*dar dast-i qudrat*]'.¹² With Möngke and his brother Hülegü in charge, the Chinggisid court could now be cleansed of the wastrels who 'regard lying and deception as exhortation and admonishment and all profligacy and slander, bravery and courage' and cleared of those Juwaynī considered the worst of all: those who consider 'the Uyghur language and script to be the height of knowledge and learning'.¹³ For many of the Iranian elite, Hülegü Khan's arrival had brought the promise of renewal and rejuvenation: an end to Arab domination and Persian subjugation, and the prospect of fresh markets and opportunities in a secure and stable world in which they would have a voice.

For Möngke, establishing his brother as ruler of the Islamic west was part of a grander scheme. He also planned that his other brother, Qubilai, should continue the gradual conquest of China and wrest control of that greatest of prizes from the Song emperor, a process to be achieved as much through defections as through military might. Such expansion would allow the Toluid brothers to build a secure power base, forming an axis that would enable them to confront any possible discontent or objections from their Chinggisid cousins to the north. This quiet ambition possibly explains Rashīd al-Dīn's report of an aside Möngke supposedly made to his brother Hülegü on the eve of his departure, telling him that, although officially instructed to return eastward after completing his task in the West, in reality he should remain there, to consolidate his kingdom from the Oxus to the Nile.¹⁴ Hülegü reluctantly toppled the Baghdad Caliphate and finally established his kingdom, the Ilkhanate, in 1258, but it was not until 1276 that his brother, Qubilai, conquered the Song capital, Hangzhou, and it was 1279, twenty years after Möngke's death, when he was finally able to replace the Song Empire with his own Yuan dynasty and could rule over an expanded, united China.

Though Hülegü led the greatest Chinggisid army ever assembled, with contingents from all the ruling houses, it was not placed on a war footing and much of their time was spent in lavish festivities and entertainment, as princes and nobles, ambassadors and rulers from all the lands and regions along Hülegü's path flocked to offer their submission and loyalty and partake of the generous welcome spread out before them.¹⁵

All along the way, as he went through the kingdom of Turan in every town, and on the road, there were decorations and in every habitation there was salutation ... In that pavilion, Hülegü honoured those who served him with wine, heart and soul, without stint ... Every kind of singing went on before the khan and there collected in that royal pavilion singers and players of instruments, each one wishing success to the war-like khan.¹⁶

The Minister Mas'ud Beg erected a tent of *nasij* (brocade), of which the covering was of white felt, and for nearly forty days they remained in that neighbourhood with constant revelry and merrymaking.¹⁷

King Hetoum of Armenia, and the Malik Shams al-Din Kart of Herat, overseen by the illustrious Arghun Aqa, were on hand to welcome the new Chinggisid *Shahanshah* as he crossed the river Oxus and entered Iran with 'the wine flowing like water'.¹⁸ The significance of his arrival is marked by historians' political use of the name 'Iran' for the first time since the Arab invasions of the seventh century. Hülegü's establishment of the Ilkhanate united the region's city-states and provinces into a polity that has persisted loosely until the present day.

That such a prospect was acceptable to Iran's elite is also unequivocally stated in the pages of Rashid al-Din, in which, like Juwaynī, he records the many pledges of loyalty proffered and even repeats Tūsī's, and his own relatives', support for the sovereignty of Hülegü Khan:

[Tūsī and his relatives, resident in Alamut] were desirous of helping Hülegü Khan. Prior to this they had been supportive of such an action and they had discussed in secret amongst themselves how easy it would be for the kingdom to fall to him [Hülegü]. Many poor people and Muslims had joined them and were in full agreement.¹⁹

The Sunni establishment's support could be discerned indirectly, through the works of the likes of 'Alim, Qādī Baydawī,²⁰ whose 'pocket history' and other blatant pro-Ilkhanid propaganda, were widely disseminated. The Qutluq khans of Kerman had already pledged their support for Chinggis Khan, while also ensuring the recognition of the caliph. The Salghurids of Shiraz and the rulers of Yazd and Herat and other city-states were quick to welcome Hülegü. Individual Persians were doing well in the East and the Persian language was fast becoming a *lingua franca* of the empire – and yet here, in the heartlands of Persia, Iranians lived in terror at the chaos outside their own city walls.²¹ A royal prince, a Turanian *shahanshah*, would unite ancient Iran, bring security and open up the markets of the Orient, creating new trade opportunities from across the Oxus and beyond. A full union between the Chinggisid Empire and Iran would paradoxically allow the establishment of Iran within its ancient borders for the first time since the Arab conquests of the seventh century. Baydawī referred to the period predating the establishment of the Ilkhanate as the 'interregnum' (*yam-i-fatrat*), though, interestingly, he does not specify how long that interruption, in which Iran was without a legitimate king, is thought to have lasted, or even whether it should be counted in decades or centuries.²²

Hülegü summoned all the local rulers of Iran to rally to his flag for the assault on the Ismaili strongholds. Most answered his call – but, significantly, the caliph in Baghdad was not among them. In Shīrāzī's notes on the event, he

describes the new Mongol shah's summons to Iran's elite as part carrot, part stick.²³ But, in general, the Iranian response was enthusiastic:

I am to start rounding up the Heretics [*mulāhadeh*]. If you send assistance in the form of troops and armaments and provisions and military supplies I will be in debt to you and your province will have peace and security, and if you neglect to do this when I become free from [military engagements] I will deal with you and after that no excuses/apology will be acceptable.

From those kings like the Atabek of Pars Muzaffer al-Din Abu Bakr bin Sa'd and the sultans of Rum 'Uz al-Din and Rukn al-Din and the rulers of Khorasan and Seistan and Mazanderun and Kirman and Rustamdar and Sherwan and Gorestan and Iraq and Azerbaijan and Arran and Lurestan and others, some with their own people, came. And the remainder they sent brothers and relatives with the army and provisions and supplies and rarities and servants and presents to his service.²⁴

For Juwaynī, that enthusiasm came from the religious zeal of the Iranians: 'the massing of the troops for the purpose of making holy war and uprooting the castles of the Heresy. And all the forces in that region, whether Turks or Taziks, put themselves in readiness ...'²⁵ Both observers comment on the many preparations that had been made for the arrival of such a huge army and on the attempts to limit the inconveniences and burdens that fell upon the people. Roads were repaired and bridges constructed, crops were grown and food needs anticipated. If nothing else, this would seem to indicate that Hülegü sought to avoid causing his new subjects disruption or discomfort. Shīrāzī, an ear if not an eyewitness, itemises the careful preparations:

And from all the provinces, they sent out provisions and supplies without limit and beyond compare setting off by donkey, camel, cow and asses (long ears) and such like. They even brought noodles, and cooked porridge, and pounded millet *gāvrus-i kufteh* from the provinces of Khitai and Uyghorestan to the foot of Alamut and Mimundaz and that castle, and every half farhang they had stacked ample flour and rice and necessities in bags of fine linen and had piled them up (upon each other), so that they looked like great hills.²⁶

Following the destruction of the Assassins' castles, the same Iranian contingents marched to Baghdad with Hülegü. However, certain myths and fabrications have evolved since the fall of Baghdad in 1258. A steady build-up of assumptions and propaganda has gradually accreted around events of the time – assumptions which, had they been based on any verifiable truth, would have undermined the credibility of any regime attempting to establish dominion over its Muslim subjects. Most of the damning claims surrounding

the events of 1258 emanated from later Arab and Mamluk sources that added their own embellishments and modifications. The examination of primary sources weakens the credibility of these claims and casts their accuracy in doubt.

The architect of the destruction of Baghdad was not Hülegü but the caliph and his fatally irresponsible ministers: Ibn al-'Alqamī and, especially, the devious Davāt-dār Majahid al-Dīn Aybek. Hülegü was eager to win the favour of his new subjects and was unlikely to have acted against the advice of his Persian ministers, as well as local allies and supporters. He moved on Baghdad only after all other avenues of compromise, negotiation and mutual consideration had been exhausted and personal insults had prevailed. Convinced by his conniving Sunni *dawatdar* (minister) that God was his ultimate protector, the Caliph Musta'sim dismissed the cautionary advice of the Shi'i minister Ibn al-'Alqamī and challenged the 'upstart' Hülegü to do his worst. The caliph's neighbour, Kurdish warlord Badr al-Din Lu'lu, laconically observed at the time that he had received correspondence from both parties as they drifted irresistibly towards military confrontation. Hülegü had requested that Lu'lu, his local ally, supply him with artillery pieces and catapults, while Caliph Musta'sim urgently demanded a 'company of musicians': a request that drove Lu'lu to desperation. 'Look at this response and weep for Islam', he lamented.²⁷ The caliph's intellectual deficiencies were well known at the time. One commentator drily observed that the caliph spent much time in his libraries – 'but not in such a way that he benefitted in knowledge by so doing'.²⁸

While the caliph was receiving his musicians and dancing girls and Hülegü his military engineers and artillery, the armies charged with the protection of Baghdad had received nothing at all. The caliph's infamous avarice had started to take its toll and his demoralised troops had begun to desert. The caliph found himself unable to part with even a fraction of his fabulous wealth, neither to intimidate Hülegü and possibly delay his approach nor to pay his disheartened and increasingly desperate soldiers. But, now that he found it impossible to pay the overdue salaries of the men who were prepared to die in his defence, any support he might once have had, disappeared. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that the caliph's desperate ministers made one final attempt to persuade him to pay his soldiers:

[H]e said to the vizier, 'Muster the army as he says, and I will make them rich with dirhams and dinars ...' The vizier knew the caliph would not give any money, but he did not show his opposition to his enemies right away and told the officer of the muster to assemble the army little by little so that the news of the gathering of the army at the caliph's court would reach everyone far and near and thus the foe would be slow to attack. Five months later the officer of the muster informed the vizier that a large number of soldiers had been assembled and it was time for

the caliph's promised gold to be given. When the vizier reported this, the caliph excused himself. The vizier despaired of his promises totally and, giving in to fate, sat waiting patiently to see what turn fortune would bring.²⁹

Hülegü's reluctance to launch a full-scale assault on the Islamic capital is well documented, but what is not so well known is that he actually proposed fasting as a means of attracting divine assistance. According to 'Aflākī, a Sufi source and the chronicler of the Mevlevi order, Hülegü was anxious to avoid further battle and bloodshed, so he ordered a general fast, binding on all, man and beast, and then, after three days, the khan urged Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī to compose a letter to the caliph beseeching him to see reason and relent of his stubbornness:

Hulegu Khan said: 'No one is to eat anything for three days, nor will the horses be given any fodder and let everyone beseech his *Yaratghān* (creator) for the conquest of Baghdad and the Khān's victory' ... The Caliph refused [to surrender], acted with insolence and uttered much abuse. That same day Baghdad was conquered and the Caliph was taken prisoner.³⁰

Banākātī's history, which recounts the events inexorably leading to the caliph's death, records the disdain in which Musta'ṣim held Hülegü and his messengers and the contempt he expressed for the young conqueror's achievements: 'O you young upstart!', Musta'ṣim exclaims, 'A few days [success] with the grace of good-fortune! What are you strutting about for?'³¹ However, Shabānkarā'ī describes a Caliph chastened by the prospect of his own imminent death, his pleas for mercy drowned out by the clamour from 'the Pillars of state, commanders, and ministers confirming Hülegü Khan in office' and warning Hülegü that 'the life of the Caliph will be the cause of fear for your country and as long as he lives, *mulk* ['rule'] will not settle on you. So destroy him with all his sons and grandsons and relatives so that no one from the Bani 'Abbas remains.'³²

According to one source, Musta'ṣim pleaded for his life in a poignant final message to Hülegü: 'What would happen if the Qa'an allowed me [to live] and didn't kill me so that I could continue to sit [on my throne] in Baghdad and [continue to] be Imam of the Muslims; so what, the killing [or sparing] of one man?'³³

Though the enormous Chinggisid army took an active part in the hostilities, Hülegü ensured that local forces were fully employed and involved in the toppling of the Arab regime. Shīrāzī's short chronicle details the direction from which local Muslim forces from each of Iran's city states, led by Hülegü's top generals, moved on the Abbasid capital:

[Hülegü] arranged the armies in such a way that from the province of Pars until the province of Rum one body of men without limit and number descended upon Baghdad.

The army of Pars and Kirman came from the road of Khuzestan and Shishtar. It was such that their left hand came by the shores of the Sea of Oman and had joined the right hand with their army from Iraq and the rest and the army of Rum proceeded from the top of the border of Syria and Diyarbakr. In such a way their left hand joined with the armies of Arran and Azerbaijan and all at the same time they poured from the districts into Iraq-i-Arab ...³⁴

Neighbouring Kurdish, Armenian and Georgian rulers all contributed forces eager to demonstrate their loyalty. The fact that the Kurdish chronicle, the *Sharafnāma* of Prince Bitlīsī, reports only Atabeg Tekele's expression of regret and remorse at the killing of the caliph suggests that dissent was rare in the ranks.³⁵ Influential Sunni families such as the Juwaynīs, Semnānīs and Iftikhāriyāns; provincial rulers; the local Muslim communities near Qazvin who had made common cause with the intellectuals who gathered around the renowned scientist, Tūsī, in Alamut; and the cultural elite as typified by such figures as the Shirazi poet Sa'dī³⁶ and the widely respected theologian Baydawī had all expressed their confidence in Hülegü Khan as he steadily assumed power during his westward march across Iran. Sa'dī even claimed that he had returned to Iran on hearing of Hülegü's arrival: 'I departed out of dread of the Turks ... On my return, I found the land at peace, the tigers having forsaken their savage disposition'.³⁷ In verses written for the Juwaynī brothers, he spoke of '*ināyat* ('divine grace') prevailing over the lands 'east and west [that] God has given to the Ilkhans'.³⁸ The Shi'i ulama had already made approaches to Hülegü, pledging their commitment to the new regime and requesting that troops be stationed in their towns and villages to provide security for the Shi'i holy sites. Their leading cleric, Mutahhar al-Hillī, had also claimed that Shi'i tradition foresaw the arrival of a Mongol-led army of deliverance. Much to Hülegü's delight, he equated the Mongols with the Ban Kantura, descendants of Ibrahim's third wife, Ketorah, and thus wove the Chinggisids into the web of Islamic and biblical tradition.³⁹ A fatwa was eventually signed, sealed and delivered by Ibn Tavvus, leader of the Shi'i ulama, stating that a just infidel ruler was preferable to an unjust Muslim sultan.⁴⁰ At the same time, Mongol troops were dispatched to Hillī to protect the Shi'i holy sites and the communities there. In Baghdad itself, Ibn al-'Alqamī's attempts to mediate between the caliph and Hülegü were portrayed as underhand and treasonable by the Dawatdar Aybak. If true, this would have cost the Shi'i minister his life – if not at the hands of the Caliph, then at Hülegü's hands, since, however grateful they were for assistance, the Mongols ultimately rewarded perfidy with death. But Hülegü clearly recognised Ibn al-'Alqamī's true role in the proceedings, since he appointed him as Baghdad's first governor:

the vizier [Ibn] 'Alqamī, when he saw that the matter was hopeless, sent an embassy in secret to the presence of the Sovereign of the World [Hülegü]:

‘If the Blessed Emperor sets off on the march for Iraq, I will arrange for half of Iraq to fall under the rule of the Sovereign, and half under the rule of the caliph.’ And he made it clear that the caliph would not listen to advice. The Sovereign was pleased by Ibn ‘Alqamī’s overture, and said, ‘He is an intelligent man; he attends both to our interests and to those of his own master.’⁴¹

One of the most persistent tales circulated about the destruction of Abbasid Baghdad was that the rivers ran red with blood and blue with ink: neither claim has any basis in reality. Though fatalities were undoubtedly high – one credible source talks of a soldier presenting Hülegü with the grisly gift of a sack containing 12,000 ears⁴² – the main cause of death was not the lick of either sword or flame, but *waba* (‘pestilence’). So calamitous was the spread of the disease that bodies began to pile up unburied and the caliph had to take personal charge of the situation. His solution was to deposit the stinking corpses in the Tigris. Dead, diseased bodies do not bleed, nor can they turn water red.

The story of the barbarian, illiterate Mongol hordes disdainfully throwing Baghdad’s priceless collections of books and manuscripts into the Tigris reflects badly on the tellers of such outrageous tales. Obviously, the men who made such claims were blinded by their own blinkered, racist vision. Such figures as the Juwaynīs and the intellectual giant Nasir al-Din Tūsī were actively observing the battle. It is inconceivable that such men would have allowed the wanton destruction of the city’s intellectual treasures. Hülegü and his generals had likewise grown up in an environment respectful of learning and of the acquisition of knowledge. Intellectual debate and theological jousting were standard forms of entertainment at the Chinggisid courts.⁴³ Book burning was not within their remit. Even Juwaynī’s own claim to have ordered the destruction of some of the books in Alamut’s famous libraries cannot survive scrutiny.⁴⁴ First, Tūsī would doubtless have vetoed any such order and, secondly, ‘Atā Malik’s claim that he wished to destroy only those books containing blasphemy (by which he meant Ismaili teaching) seems less than credible since, in his own great history, he reproduced Hasan-i-Sabbāh’s autobiography – arguably the most blasphemous text in the whole library. Though Baghdad was looted and destruction was widespread, the attack was controlled and monitored and the targets were selected with care.⁴⁵

In recognition of Tūsī’s fame and his services to Hülegü in negotiating the surrender of Alamut and Baghdad, the Ilkhan built him an observatory, the *Rasadkhana*, in his new capital in Maragheh. Tūsī’s *Rasadkhana*, together with the nearby library and lecture halls, became internationally famous and attracted scholars from all over the world. Tūsī himself had one hundred students studying under him. Bar Hebraeus is just one of the host of renowned scholars who have paid tribute to this institution and, in particular, to its enormous library of 40,000 books, composed of tomes transferred from

Baghdad and presumably also from Alamut. The establishment of this library and the use of the *waqf* (financial endowment) to underpin the institution enraged the ulama and scholars of Mamluk Cairo who accused Tūsī of stealing their books and misappropriating their *waqf*. As well as ‘stealing’ the books and *waqf*, Tūsī also ‘stole’ at least one librarian: Ibn Fuwatī, who eventually became his chief librarian. Ibn Fuwatī continued in this role after Tūsī’s death until he eventually returned to Baghdad and took charge of the city’s own refurbished libraries. One of the few pro-Ilkhanate Arab historians, Ibn Fuwatī achieved fame for his detailed biographical dictionaries, which provided a record of all those who passed through the doors of the library to which he devoted himself.⁴⁶

A further slur against the Persian besiegers was that they inflicted indiscriminate and wanton destruction on the city. This claim too is highly suspect, and seems exaggerated, at the very least. Mamluk historian Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Fadlallāh al-ʿUmarī has detailed the actions and behaviour of the occupying troops during the period of looting and ‘rampage’. The picture he paints does not support the impression given by so many later sources, who were generally hostile to the Ilkhanid regime.

Writing in the first person, ʿUmarī quotes the words of al-ʿIzz al-Irbilī in conversation with the celebrated musician ʿAbd al-Muʿmin Urmawī at Mustansiriyya College, after the ‘events’ (*vāghiʿat*) in question. Urmawī claims that Hülegü instructed the notables of Baghdad to divide the city’s houses and gated quarters (*durūb*), along with their neighbourhoods, between his great commanders and amirs so they could spend periods of between one and three days (depending on their rank) ‘kill[ing], captur[ing] and loot[ing]’.⁴⁷ Since the musician Urmawī was particularly cooperative, generous, respectful and even deferential towards his allotted ‘looter’, Baiju Noyan was in turn respectful, grateful and in no way abusive towards him. In fact, Baiju Noyan was so impressed by his reception and by the hospitality afforded to him – which included a musical recital by Urmawī, together with a lavish feast – that he introduced the initially apprehensive musician to Hülegü himself. The conqueror was pleased with the musician and offered to grant him any request: ‘So he allotted me the garden and the full benefits that I had when the caliph reigned and added a pension that included bread, meat, and two dinars worth of fodder for my mount.’⁴⁸

Other groups, including Christians and Shiʿa and those merchants who had already established contacts with the Chinggisids, were able to arrange for their property to be safeguarded within Baghdad’s walls: this gives the lie to the popular image of a chaotic, destructive orgy of murder and devastation:

There was a group of merchants in Baghdad that used to travel to Khorasan and other places that had contacted the Mongol emirs earlier and obtained letters of safe conduct. So when Baghdad was conquered, they went to the emirs and returned with guards to secure their homes.⁴⁹

Pillaging, looting and destruction undoubtedly did take place. Independent records portray a city in a very sorry state and describe widespread desolation. But we should not forget that Baghdad had been in economic decline for over half a century before Hülegü's arrival. The civil war between Shi'a and Sunnis that had been raging unchecked for a number of years had devastated many parts of the capital. But what had proved most calamitous for the once mighty and noble city was the devastating flood that engulfed and destroyed much of the capital a year before the arrival of Hülegü and his armies. Mustawfī Qazvīnī likens the region to an ocean: the Tigris burst its banks and Baghdad was 'ruined from the floods of the fearful sea'.⁵⁰

Few tears were shed at the passing of the caliph. Tūsī had assured Hülegü that there would be no heavenly repercussions if he became the agent of the caliph's demise.⁵¹ Within days of the fall of Baghdad, Hülegü ordered the clean up to begin and the bazaars to re-open and business to re-commence. Commerce soon returned to the city. A contemporary observer noted that the Shi'a from the provinces were quick to exploit the situation: 'The inhabitants of Hilla, Kufa, and Sib used to bring food to Baghdad. These people benefitted from selling food for the [exorbitant] price of gemmed books, inlaid brassware or other valuable objects. Many of them enriched themselves this way.'⁵² Atā Malik Juwaynī soon took up the reins of power. As governor of Baghdad, he oversaw the rebirth of the city as a thriving and prosperous metropolis, though it was far from being the glorious capital of former centuries.

While Baghdad began its journey towards recovery, Hülegü initially established his capital in Maragheh. Within a short time, however, Tabriz was to become the cosmopolitan Ilkhanid seat of government and a new gateway to the East,⁵³ attracting adventurers and opportunists, merchants and artisans from across the Islamic world and from as far afield as Europe, seeking contact and trade with the Chinggisid Empire. Many of those who visited Tabriz – and, no doubt, 'networked' in the learned halls of the nearby *Rasadkhana* – also negotiated business deals and opportunistic adventures with travellers from the East. Scanning Ibn Fuwātī's biographies of his library's patrons, it quickly becomes evident that languages were an asset for the upwardly mobile of the Ilkhanate, and Chinese, in particular, was of increasing importance. Although the breakup of the Chinggisid khanates complicated communication between the allied Toluid states of Ilkhanid Iran and Yuan China, the first decades of Ilkhanid rule saw large-scale movements of people between East and West. Qubilai regularly requested Iranian expertise for his military, architectural and administrative adventures and those Iranians who responded to his requests were granted material rewards, administrative posts and real estate. They joined a growing community of western Muslims – many of them second and third generation Chinggisid insiders and loyalists – who identified fully with the imperial dreams of the ruling elite. Iranian eyes were straying irrevocably

eastward. They no longer sought a centre of power, a mecca of learning, prestige and wisdom, in the Islamic West. The intellectual, cultural, political and commercial magnet was now firmly entrenched in the cities of the East, and the loyal sons and daughters of the empire, the newly faithful who followed the imperial dream, were drawn to the roads and caravans that stretched out towards China.

One such loyal subject was Sayyid Ajall Bokhārī, the grandson of a general in the Khwārazmshāh's defeated army, and the forefather of the historian Khwandamīr. After a string of governorships, Bokhārī was finally appointed governor of the strategically sensitive province of Dali (Yunnan), where he successfully implemented Yuan reformist policies on education, agriculture, irrigation and administration. Sayyid Ajall was the province of Dali's first Yuan governor and he ruled with the benign conviction of the imperial colonist, eager to spread the seeds of knowledge, investment and opportunity and to open up wider markets to the multiethnic traders and *ortaq*s of the empire, from both east and west, and to enlighten the farmers of the province as to the potential benefits of irrigation and crop diversity.⁵⁴ Such was his influence that many of today's Yunnan province Muslims claim descent from this Persian champion of the Chinggisid revolution.⁵⁵

Less well known is the story of Ismā'il and Alā al-Dīn, military engineers from Shiraz and Syria, who were rewarded both financially and with administrative posts in the East and given robes of honour.⁵⁶ Many are also unaware of the Persian 'Alā al-Dīn and his brother, who made financial contributions to Qubilai's military campaign in Turkestan in the late 1260s and '70s, for which Alā al-Dīn was rewarded with lands in Hangzhou. It was Alā al-Dīn who, in 1281, built the Phoenix Mosque in the commercial and entertainment heart of Hangzhou, the cultural capital of the Yuan state. The construction of this imposing building on Imperial Street, together with the conversion of the Jujing Yuan, the former royal gardens, into a picturesque Muslim graveyard, reflected the status of this new community of predominantly merchant traders in Hangzhou.⁵⁷ They became the warp to the Toluid Empire's weft, and their apparent success and acceptance in traditionally xenophobic China is a remarkable achievement. Their success and acceptance were probably mirrored by that of Chinese adventurers in the other half of the empire, Iran, but, unfortunately, documentary evidence of this is missing.

Quinsai (Hangzhou) surrendered peacefully to the Yuan armies under Bayan Noyan in 1276 and the new regime was installed with minimal violence and disruption. Bayan Noyan had grown up in western Turkestan and had no doubt been exposed to Persian culture from an early age. Together with his father, he joined Hülegü's army and marched on Iran around 1254. He spent his formative teenage years in Iran, where it is believed that he took a wife and fathered a son.⁵⁸ Having witnessed first-hand Hülegü Khan's experience forming a state and establishing a functioning capital in Iran, Bayan would

doubtless have been tempted to call upon his own intimates and companions from his youth in Iran when, some years later, he was asked to perform a similar feat, undertaking this daunting project in China.

Bayan had completed the peaceful takeover of the Song capital and successfully evacuated the empress dowager and her considerable train of hangers-on from the city.⁵⁹ Many others associated with the royal family had already fled and Bayan was left with a city without a working administration. Former Jurchen officials had long proved willing servants of the Chinggisid courts and they joined other second-generation émigré groups flocking south with Qubilai's armies. Various sources inform us that many Iranian opportunists and adventurers were also more than willing to immerse themselves in Chinese local government.⁶⁰ One such opportunist, the artisan Sharāf al-Dīn, initially 'noticed' by Bayan, eventually became a *daraghuchi*⁶¹ of Hangzhou (among other postings) – though his lack of *nisba*⁶² suggests that his father might well have been an early forced emigrant from Persian Turkestan.⁶³ However, it is the cemeteries that provide the most striking evidence of Persian penetration of eastern China. Hangzhou's Jujing graveyard, in particular, shows that a wealthy and influential Persian community began arriving in the city from 1279.

In 1281, Alā al-Dīn and his younger brother, both rich merchants, were rewarded by Qubilai Khan for the financial investment they had made in his war effort in Turkestan. Eschewing an official position, Alā al-Dīn accepted the award of an empty plot of land in downtown Hangzhou. His brother 'Omar – and eventually his son Jamāl al-Dīn – accepted government positions. Alā al-Dīn's land, the Qulin Yuan, was a derelict plot on the bustling Imperial Way, Hangzhou's main thoroughfare running from the Feng-shan Gate in the south, below the imperial Wu Hill under the royal gaze of the former Song Emperor's palace, and north through the heart of the city, along the central canal with its numerous bridges, finally exiting the city from the north, through the Wulin Gate.

Alā al-Dīn recognised the need for a mosque for the growing Muslim community and he felt confident enough to build it on the plot he had been assigned, right in the bustling heart of the city. He constructed his mosque on Imperial Street, not far from the central Drum Tower and the gates to the Emperor's palace enclave, rising high above the city and the beautiful West Lake. A picture of the area emerges from the accounts of contemporary gazetteers. There were shops, restaurants, stalls and street hawkers: crowds of people flocked to the street twenty-four hours a day.

At the third or fourth drum, there start to be fewer people walking around; at the fifth drum, the sellers at the morning market were opening their shops ...

In front of the middle Wazi they sold ten-colored candy. Moreover there were 'shiny stone carts' selling sweet porridge and milk

dumplings. The sellers' cries all added to the din of the capital. By day in the market they also bought and sold things. Moreover, the goods for the night market which were sold from carts in front of the middle Wa included fragrant tea and choice soups. At the entrance to Lion Lane, they sold slow-cooked fish, bowls of chicken noodles, and '[seven] treasure' soup. At the middle Wazi, in front of the Wulin garden,⁶⁴ they sold fried white (sheep) intestines and boiled intestines. In Guanfei ridge [they sold] light sugar syrup. In front of the Wu Jian building, they sold Indian gooseberry and fresh lychees. In the west lane of the Muyan market, they sold buns with vegetable filling and thousand-layer [pancakes]. Moreover, along the street they peddle fermented beans with ginger, fatty [pork]-rind, roasted peppers, sour beef, sheep fat and leek pastry, pickled sheep feet, and pickled crab. Further, there were [peddlers] bearing trays, who sold spicy lung, spicy noodle soup, preserved meat, starchy soup, gingered shrimp, fermented jellyfish, clear snail soup, sheep's blood soup, barbarian chopped garlic, jellyfish, chopped ocean snails, dumplings, noodle dishes and other products. Each seller has their particular cry. Moreover, along the main street there was a night market selling divinatory trigrams [...]. In the middle Wazi there were temporary displays where holy women from the Western Mountain were selling divinatory trigrams [...].

In the rest of the roadways and alleys, there are also night markets selling fruit and sweets, and likewise there are street sellers peddling their divinatory trigrams, and those who rely on selling leftover food [after the stalls have closed], and they don't stop before the third geng [i.e. In front of the middle Wazi they sold ten-colored candy]. Moreover there were 'shiny stone carts' selling sweet porridge and milk dumplings. The sellers' cries all added to the din of the capital. By day in the market they also bought and sold things. Moreover, the goods for the night market which were sold from carts in front of the middle Wa included fragrant tea and choice soups. At the entrance to Lion Lane, they sold slow-cooked fish, bowls of chicken noodles, and '[seven] treasure' soup. At the middle Wazi, in front of the Wulin garden,⁶⁵ they sold fried white (sheep) intestines and boiled intestines. In Guanfei ridge [they sold] light sugar syrup. In front of the Wu Jian building, they sold Indian gooseberry and fresh lychees. In the west lane of the Muyan market, they sold buns with vegetable filling and thousand-layer [pancakes]. Moreover, along the street they peddle fermented beans with ginger, fatty [pork]-rind, roasted peppers, sour beef, sheep fat and leek pastry, pickled sheep feet, and pickled crab. Further, there were [peddlers] bearing trays, who sold spicy lung, spicy noodle soup, preserved meat, starchy soup, gingered shrimp, fermented jellyfish, clear snail soup, sheep's blood soup, barbarian chopped garlic, jellyfish,

chopped ocean snails, dumplings, noodle dishes and other products. Each seller has their particular cry. Moreover, along the main street there was a night market selling divinatory trigrams [...]. In the middle Wazi there were temporary displays where holy women from the Western Mountain were selling divinatory trigrams [...].

In the rest of the roadways and alleys, there are also night markets selling fruit and sweets, and likewise there are street sellers peddling their divinatory trigrams, and those who rely on selling leftover food [after the stalls have closed], and they don't stop before the third geng [i.e. midnight], and even in the winter months in great snowstorms, there are still night markets selling things; and after midnight there are those who carry containers selling tea, and during the slack winter seasons, [farmers] don trays and offer tea, deep-fried noodle cake and 'gentle' tea before they pass [you], and this capital's public personalities and private citizens carry on like this, and only late in the night return to their 'old' homes., ...⁶⁶

Though the site that 'Alā al-Dīn had been awarded was derelict, it served as a spill-over area for the customers of its two adjoining properties: a bar that doubled as a brothel, and a very popular *wazi* ('entertainment centre') that served as a venue for theatre troupes, singing and music performances and even the operas and plays for which the Yuan period was justly famed. The *wazi*, the derelict garden and the bar are all marked on city maps from the early 1270s. However, a map from the early Ming period indicates that only the mosque survived, which suggests that the other two establishments were forced to close. It is surprising that the Persian community felt confident enough to maintain such a high profile presence among their Chinese hosts, and that there was no backlash against their community, despite the fact that the presence of the mosque forced the closure of two popular centres of entertainment.

In front of the Middle Wazi there is the Wulin Garden,⁶⁷ and facing it there is the Sanyuanlou, in which the Kang and Shen families have opened establishments. Above the entrance there is a color painting to welcome guests, and it features a red and green gate, dark red curtains, and gold and red 'gardenia' lanterns; the courtyard and portico are decorated with luxuriant greens, and wine is served freely and easily. But upon entering the establishment, after the main hall which is about twenty paces long, it divides into northern and southern corridors, with side-rooms for the relieving of discomfort; and one can sit and dine at one's convenience, and towards evening the lamps shine with a glittering brilliance, and illuminate both above and below, and tens of heavily-made-up prostitutes gather along the sides of the main hall, to wait until the drunk guests, in whose eyes they seem like heavenly beings, call them. Further, there is the Southern Wazi's Xichun building

where Cook Wang has opened an establishment; and Huayue building in New Street where Cook Shi has opened an establishment ...⁶⁸

Not only did the new mosque occupy a commanding position in the centre of the city, but the growing community had also secured prime estate for their final resting places. The Ju-jing Yuan cemetery occupies the land adjacent to the south-east corner of the lake, which was formerly part of the royal gardens. Many of the rich Muslim merchants lived above the lake on the exclusive 'Strangers' Hill'. Many of them were involved in the ceramics trade: not only in buying the prized blue and white porcelain and celadon, but also in providing the Hangzhou and Jingdezhen potters with cobalt from Kashan for the distinctive blue of their designs.

The Persian community of Hangzhou, which according to Rashīd al-Dīn was provided with three mosques, was large and established enough to have imported their own calligraphers and wordsmiths. 'Khinsāi contains three large mosques of the first rank which on Fridays are filled with Muslims. The inhabitants are so many that for the most part they (Muslims) do not know each other.'⁶⁹ Sandy Morton saw evidence of original poetry in the inscriptions on the thirteenth-century tombstones discovered in Hangzhou in 1920. They also contained verses lifted from Sa'dī, which suggests that the locals had access to the latest verse from Iran. Why the Persians in Hangzhou were so popular with the locals has not yet been ascertained. But there is very little trace of them in evidence there today, which is surprising given their high profile in medieval times.

With the collapse of the Song dynasty and the abandonment of the city by the Song elite, Qinsai opened its doors to an influx of foreigners, strangers, opportunists and medieval carpetbaggers. Among other consequences of this, the city emerged as a centre for the antiques trade. *Guangjiku* proliferated: dealers in the riches, rarities and luxuries left by the departing Song elite and their loyalists. A certain Huang Jin (1277–1357) describes the dealings at the official *guangjiku* warehouse:

When the present dynasty conquered the Song, a decree ordered that important officials be assigned to the Branch Central Secretariats and begin to govern the [Song] territories. Whatever [Song imperial property] remained in the treasury was to be transferred to the *Guangjiku* and sold off [for cash].⁷⁰

Though the Song loyalists had a voice in China and, for a couple of decades, were vocal in their opposition to the Yuan regime, their ranks were in perpetual decline and they were increasingly becoming an irrelevance. In Hangzhou, the commentator Zhou Mi (1232–98) stubbornly refused all offers of employment, choosing to live in relative poverty rather than abandon his ideals and cooperate with the new administration. An aesthete and an avid collector of fine art, today he is mainly known for his book describing the painting collections of his select group of art lovers. However, reading between the lines, his recollections of his

close friends and their collections reveal much about the contemporary life of Mongol Hangzhou. Most of the social elite who made up his intimate circle were employed as officials in the Yuan administration. At least one was a Muslim: Gao Kegong (1248–1310), a Central Asian Turk who was to become an extremely influential member of the Yuan government. Among Zhou Mi's writings is a description of a Muslim burial he witnessed at the Jujing Yuan cemetery, on the shores of West Lake.⁷¹ His detailed report of the event provides a sympathetic eyewitness account of one small part of Yuan Hangzhou's social mosaic. Gao Kegong's presence among Hangzhou's elite intellectual and artistic circle, whose illustrious members included Qubilai Khan's favourite painter and calligrapher, Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), is yet more evidence that the Muslim community of Hangzhou had integrated into Chinese society at the highest levels and infiltrated a previously closed clique.

Once established in his grand new international capital, Khanbaliq, Qubilai Khan acknowledged both his position and the universal recognition he had earned as the new Emperor of China and his grandfather, Chinggis Khan, became *Taizu* ('grand progenitor') and retrospective founder of *Dà Yuán*, with a divine mandate from heaven. In recognition of his imperial duties, Qubilai ordered the history of the previous rulers of China to be written. Since the Chinggisids had united a split empire, three histories were chronicled: the Song (960–1279), the Chin/Jin/Jurchen (1115–1234) and the Khitans or Liao (907–1125). After the fall of the Yuan in 1369, the successor dynasty, the Ming, composed the official history of the Chinggisids, the *Yuan Shi*, in recognition of the Chinggisids' divine right to rule.⁷²

In Iran, attitudes were also changing. By the time Hülegü embarked upon his epic march across Asia, history was already being rewritten. Ibn al-'Athīr had resurrected the rumours that the caliph had made the first overtures to Chinggis Khan, because he wanted help getting rid of the blasphemous Khwārazmshāh. Juwaynī records the welcome Jebe Noyan had received as a liberator of the oppressed Muslims of Eastern Turkistan. At the same time, it began to whisper that Chinggis Khan was more than just an instrument of God's vengeance on a single sinner, the Khwārazmshāh. The Sufi historians claim that one of their shaykhs – perhaps even Najm al-Dīn Kubra himself – led the infidel armies to inflict God's punishment on the eastern Islamicate, a deed the Great Khan laid claim to himself.⁷³ The Shi'i also recognised the divine role of the Chinggisids. They acknowledged their presence in Islamic cosmology and regarded them as both their prophesied saviours and the destroyers of blasphemous Baghdad, 'the mother of cruelty, home of injustices, and mother of adversity'.⁷⁴

But it was after the fall of Baghdad and the period of comparative stability, security and prosperity following the establishment of the Ilkhanate that a new narrative emerged allowing for Chinggisid domination of Muslim Iran and Iranian support for their new, initially infidel masters. The Kurdish chronicler

Shabānkārā'ī (d. 1358) clearly expresses the attitude developing towards the figure of Chinggis Khan:

It must be known that from the start of the creation of the world and the creation of mankind no pādeshāh, sultan, khalif, Caesar, khan, qa'an, faqfor (Chinese emperor), khosrow, raj, Jaipāl, Raja, tuba (king of Yeman), amir, or king has exercised such power or dominion over the world as Chinggis Khan and his progeny have.⁷⁵

He continues: 'God fastened the attributes of divine favour and eternal grace in the soul of this man [Chinggis Khan]'⁷⁶ and comes dangerously close to granting the Great Khan prophethood.

Juwaynī believed that he had discovered God's secret intent.⁷⁷ As Ilkhanid rule became more entrenched, cooperation between Turk and Tajik grew and conversion to Islam became an increasingly important part of the narrative, the Chinggisids' position on the divine chequerboard began to find expression in Iranian chronicles and literature. Shabānkārā'ī describes how divine grace and assistance had ensured that 'this ulus and the grandeur of this country progresses and moment to moment by the power of God Almighty that it is increased and another country added so that this state is united for eternity ...'⁷⁸ With the aid of that same divine grace and assistance (*tā'yīd lotf kardgār*), Hülegü had swept across Iran and arrived at the gates of Baghdad to challenge the caliph's claim to God's favour. 'God holds us dear and despises you',⁷⁹ Hülegü taunted him. The identification of the Chinggisids with divine favour became all the more entrenched with the disappearance of the caliphate. Not only was the caliph no longer a figure of unity and guidance for the Sunni community, but he no longer served to bestow legitimacy on Islamic dynasties. Now, legitimacy was conferred by proximity to or connections with the royal Chinggisid bloodline, and, as we can see from the wealth of titles assumed by Ghazan, royal blood conferred both authority and divine attributes. Ghazan was living proof of the divinity of the Chinggisid bloodline: 'the eye and light of the house of Chinggis Khan ... the purpose behind his advent',⁸⁰ 'God's [ultimate] secret intent'.⁸¹ Although Ghazan embraced Islam, he did not abandon his Mongol heritage and he accepted his divine right to rule. The Georgian chronicle *Kartlis Tskhovreba* savages Nawruz for his adoption of the 'faith of the Persians', describing him as 'an enemy to Christians' and blaming him for the lawlessness and injustice visited on the country in general and on Christians in particular. But it also praises Ghazan, a 'virtuous man without malice', for bringing the 'wrath of God upon Navroz's head', for ruling 'the country fairly and with a kind heart' and for being 'a law-giver' who 'loved justice' and was accepted as the legitimate king.⁸²

The Sunni ulama – whose authority came from the individual expertise, experience and learning of the clerics of whom the caliph had been the mouthpiece – had now relinquished their power: sometimes to infidel princes

and charismatic religious preachers, but often to Sufis with devoted followers and powerful and influential *khanqahs*. These Sufi figures often preached heterodox doctrines and ideas, devoid of the strict discipline and rigorous scrutiny of traditional Islamic learning. The distinction between the traditional schools of Islamic thought, and even between Sunnism and Shi'ism, had become blurred. Doctrinal accuracy went unpoliced. Increasingly, it was the charisma or blood lineage of the preachers that dictated the authenticity and validity of their voices and messages. Those Sufi voices could increasingly be heard echoing through the best Ilkhanid courts and *ordus*. Safi al-Din of Ardabil hosted all the most powerful people in the land, both infidel and faithful, and was himself received by Ghazan Khan. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī encouraged the Parvana of Rum to continue his good work by ruling on behalf of and mediating with the Mongol overlords of Tabriz.⁸³ Rūmī explains that these 'lion-like manly men' could be 'compassionate and incorruptible helpers ... full of mercy and patience [with] God's disposition to rectify matters'. Rūmī instructed his followers to 'profit from them before a calamity'.⁸⁴ Ibn Taymiya was able to attack the practice of Islam in Iran under the Ilkhans when he found evidence of scholars equating Chinggis Khan with the prophets, and discovered the ascendancy of often unschooled shaykhs and *alavis*. For Ibn Taymiya, the infidel regime of the Ilkhans was a legitimate target for jihad. He claimed it was incumbent on all Muslims to fight against this satanic state: 'God made fighting a religious duty.'⁸⁵

For the Ilkhans themselves, their religious identity continued to be problematic. The Shi'i exerted a powerful attraction. While Oljeitu was the only one who actually converted to Shi'ism and embraced Shi'i teaching (his son, Abu Sa'id, reverted to Sunnism), the Ilkhanate had embraced a spirituality that sought direct access to divine knowledge, and revered those whose sacred bloodlines promised more direct pathways to God. The proliferation of shaykhs, dervishes, *qalandars*, (antinomian, mendicant sufi) Sufi lodges and claimants to genealogies connecting them with the Alid Imams created a religiously rich milieu. In such an environment, the Ilkhans possessed and were universally awarded political and spiritual credibility. Even the Christians believed that 'the Lord cast his merciful glance upon the country and Khan Abagha'.⁸⁶ The recognition of the sacred genealogy flowing through the Chinggisid bloodline also meant that any interruption of rule, or any question mark regarding a khan's right to rule, was fatal. Arpa Khan had many fine attributes – but without the divine right of a legitimate king his attempts to govern Iran were doomed. It was not until the capture of the Iranian throne by the Safavid Shah in 1501 that the source of legitimacy passed from the Chinggisids to the Alids: a remarkable achievement matched only by the family's prestige and power in much of Asia and their divine status as emperors of China.

Notes:

1. See Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).
2. For Hülegü's assignment, see Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma* (Tehran: Iran University Press, 1999) (facsimile of British Library MS Or. 2833), pp. 5–15. Transl. L. J. Ward as 'Zafarnamā of Mustawfī', PhD dissertation, Manchester University, 1983, vol. II. For Hülegü's journey, see John Masson-Smith Jr, 'Hülegü Moves West: High Living and Heartbreak on the Road to Baghdad', in Linda Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 111–34.
3. Alā al-Dīn 'Atā Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i-Jahān Gushā*, vol. III, Mirza Muhammad Qazvīnī, ed (Leiden: Brill, 1958) – transl. John Boyle as *The History of the World Conqueror* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 50. See also John Boyle, 'The Death of the Last Abbasid Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account', in John Boyle, *The Mongol World Empire 1206–1370* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977), p. 67.
4. For the Qara Khitai, see Michal Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between China and the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
5. See Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Ab'l Faraj the Son of Aaron Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus Being the First Part of His Political History*, transl. E. A. Wallis Budge (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003). Bar Hebraeus describes Jalal al-Din as 'leaping all over Iran'.
6. Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*. Quoted in E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia: From Ferdowsi to Sa'di*, vol II (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), pp. 96–98.
7. Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, ed. 'Abdul al-Husayn Navāī, (Tehran: Inteshārāt Amīr Kabīr, 1983) pp. 793, 797, 799; see also, partial transl. E. G. Browne as *The Select History* (London: Luzac, 1913).
8. On the dispersal of workers throughout the empire, see Thomas Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 6.
9. Mustawfī Qazvīnī, transl. Ward, *Zafarnāma*, vol.II, p. 5.
10. Ibid. vol. II, pp. 5–6.
11. Juwaynī, *History of the World Conqueror*, p. 638 (pp. 139–40 in Qazvīnī edn of Persian original).
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 7 (p. 4 in Qazvīnī edn of Persian original).
14. Rashīd al-Dīn, transl. Wheeler Thackston, 'Rashiduddin Fazlullah Jami 'u't-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles', in Wheeler Thackston, *Classical Writings of the Mediaeval Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p. 977. For Persian edition, see Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāma' al-tavārikh*, ed. Mohammad Roushan and Mustafa Mūsavi (Tehran: Nasher Elborz, 1994), p. 977; both editions have shared/cross-referenced pagination.
15. For a study of the support given the Chinggisids, see Judith Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', in Judith Pfeiffer, ed., *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp.129–68.
16. Mustawfī Qazvīnī, transl. Ward, *Zafarnāma*, vol. II, p. 18.
17. Juwaynī, *History of the World Conqueror*, p. 612 (vol. III, p. 98 in Qazvīnī edn of original).

18. Muhammad Shabānkarā'ī (b. 'Alī), *Majma' al-Ansāb*, ed. Mīr Hāshim Muhaddith (Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1984), p. 261.
19. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāma' al-tavārikh*, p. 985.
20. See Charles Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqā: Qādī Baidāwī's Rearrangement of History', *Studia Iranica* 30, 36 (2001, 2007).
21. See Ibn Tabātabā' al-Fakhrī, trans. C. E. J. Whiting, *al-Fakhrī: On the Systems of Government and the Muslim Dynasties* (London: Luzac, 1947), p. 27; H. Derenbourg, ed., *Tārīkh al-Fakhrī* (Paris, 1895), p. 40.
22. See Baidawī, quoted in Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqā', pt. II, pp. 52, 58.
23. Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1236–1311) was a scientist and a colleague of Tūsī's at the *Rasadhkhāneh* in Maragheh. He compiled a collection of historical notes, anecdotes and observations. See *Akhbār-ye-Moghūlān dar Anbāneh-ye Qutb*, ed. Īraj Afshār, (Qum: Library of Ayatollah Mar'ashī, 2010).
24. Shīrāzī, transl. Lane, *Mongols in Iran: Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's Akhbār-i Mughūlān* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 23–4 (pagination here and throughout refers to Persian text, as indicated in translation). See also George Lane, 'Mongol News: The Akhbār-i Moghūlān dar Anbāneh Qutb by Qutb al-Dīn Mahmūd ibn Mas'ūd Shīrāzī', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22: 3–4 (October 2012), p. 547.
25. Juwaynī, *History of the World Conqueror*, p. 615 (p. 102 in Qazvīnī edn of Persian original).
26. Shīrāzī, transl. Lane, *Mongols in Iran: Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's Akhbār-i Mughūlān* (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 24 (pagination refers to Persian text).
27. Ibn Tabātabā', *al-Fakhrī: On the Systems of Government*, p. 43; Derenbourg, *Tārīkh al-Fakhrī*, p. 65.
28. Ahmad of Luristan, *Tohfa: Nasihat al-Mulūk*, ed. M. T. Dānesh-Pajuh (Tehran: B.T.N.K., 1962), p. 215; transl. Louise Marlowe, 'Uses of Historical Akhbār in Some Eleventh-Century Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes' (seminar presentation, SOAS, 22 October 2012).
29. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāma' al-tavārikh*, pp. 1,002–3.
30. Shams al-Dīn Ahmad al-'Aflakī, ed. Tahsin Yazici 'Ārifī, *Manāqib al-'arifīn* (Ankara: Turk Tarih Karumu Basimevi, 1959), vol. I, pp. 202–203 – transl. John O'Kane as *The Feats of the Knowers of God* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 140. See also Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Discourses of Rumi*, transl. A. J. Arberry (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 121, which describes Chinggis Khan fasting for ten days.
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41. Ahmad of Luristan, *Tohfah*, pp. 215–18.
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58. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāma' al-tavārīkh*, p. 199; For the wife, see C. C. Hsiao, 'Bayan', in Hok-Lam Chan, Peter W. Geier, Igor de Rachewiltz, Ch'i Ch'ing Hsiao, May Wang and Otto Harrisowitz, eds, *In the Service of the Khan* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993), pp. 584–607.
59. See A. C. Moule, 'Hangchou to Shangtu AD 1276', *T'oung Pao* 16: 3 (July 1915).
60. Yasuhiro Yokkaichi, 'Chinese and Muslim Diasporas under Mongol Hegemony', in Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *The East Asian Mediterranean: Maritime Crossroads of Culture, Commerce and Human Migration* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008).

61. *Shahna* (Persian), *basqaq* (Turkish), *daraghuchi* (Mongol): military overseer appointed by central government to ensure stability and the collection of taxes.
62. Part of name reflecting place of origin – e.g. Shirazi, Tabrizi, Bokhari, Qazvini.
63. See Guo Xiao-hang, 'The Study and Interpretation of the First Shanghai Da Lu Hua Chi – She La Fu Ding in Yuan Dynasty' (Beijing: Tsinghua Tongfang Knowledge Network Technology, 2007), available at en.cnki.com.cn.
64. In 1281 chosen for the site of the Phoenix Mosque.
65. The site a short time later for the Phoenix Mosque, built in 1281.
66. Wu Zimu, *Meng Liang Lu*, ed. Pan Yiping (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1980), *Juan* 13, pp. 119–20. 'Night Markets'; original translation 2018, by Florence Hodous, Post-doctoral scholar at Renmin University, Beijing.
67. The site chosen to build the imposing Phoenix Mosque in 1281.
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74. Wassāf, *Tārīkh-i-Wassāf*, p. 36; Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, p. 116; Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge*, p. 140.
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83. Rūmī, *Discourses*, p. 19.
84. Aflākī, *Feats of the Knowers of God*, pp. 180–1.
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Concepts of Government and State Formation in Mongol Iran

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It is difficult now to recover the Mongols' own concept of government following their conquest of Iran in the mid thirteenth century, and whether they had any sense that they were forming a 'state', or what that state would consist of.¹ Of course, this is not to say that they did not intend to rule the territories they had acquired or have a good sense of how they were going to do so – substantial parts of Asia had, after all, come under their rule by 1258. In Iran, they had appointed a series of viceroys to serve their interests, carry out a census of the population and collect tribute revenues for the previous forty years.² As Tom Allsen points out, Mongol practice was reasonably consistent across their territories 'south of the steppe' – that is, north China, Turkestan (Central Asia) and Khorasan – in the early period. In general, the Mongols relied on the services of the indigenous scribal and bureaucratic classes, accommodating existing local dynasties of Inner Asian origin, such as those in southern Iran, and international merchants.³ The practice of government, therefore, was one thing and its outlines are reasonably well known; an articulated concept behind the practice was a different matter altogether. In fact, what we can discern more clearly are the competing concepts of government espoused by the Persian bureaucratic classes and their efforts to impose their vision on their Mongol masters. It is mainly this aspect of the question that I shall address here.

In considering terms such as 'government' and 'state' in connection with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iran, we must be careful not to load them with the weight of modern ideas of what they involve. In Iran, as elsewhere in the medieval world, government could be reduced to the basic elements of collecting revenues (from land, trade and the 'profits of justice'); maintaining law and order (providing security of life and goods to their subjects according to some mutually acceptable points of reference); exercising justice – an important aspect of law and order, in that it implies controlling the strong as well as protecting the weak; and the defence of the realm against hostile forces. If these were the tasks of the State, so were they all the more particularly the duties of the ruler, almost invariably a 'king' – a monarch, shah, sultan or khan

– ultimately solely responsible for the government of the kingdom. The ruler's legitimacy, whether based on heredity or election or a combination of the two (for example, election from a pool of dynastically eligible candidates), ultimately rested on his willingness and ability to uphold the law, since – in principle, if not in practice – the ruler was not above the law. Hence 'justice' was a crucial requirement, and the ruler was exhorted to consult the wise and the competent, needed to draw on the services of a trained bureaucracy, and was expected to carry out programmes for the common good.⁴

In addition, and in order to fulfil these obligations, the ruler needed to balance competing sources of authority and power within the kingdom, both military and religious – the amirs, provincial rulers and the Islamic establishment of clerics and Sufi shaykhs – the equivalents of the barons and the Church in western societies. In practice, the ruler's apparently unbounded autocratic power was limited by the need to negotiate the participation of different groups competing for influence in the state, in return for a measure of acquiescence in royal authority.⁵ At the same time, in medieval Iran as in Europe, formal hierarchical ties as well as informal bonds of friendship and patronage could create personal groupings and networks that played an important role in the political field. Mutual interdependence and shared interests could break down the apparent contradictions between secular and ecclesiastic power.⁶ Government was thus essentially personal, exercised at the ruler's court and effective only so far as its reach extended – perhaps through a number of subordinate provincial courts in the image of the centre. Indeed, we could suppose that the State might be a purely territorial concept: the area over which sovereignty was claimed in reality or possible in practice. The concept of the State, if ever distinctly recognised, could be expressed either by the term *dowlāt* (fortune or turn), signifying the felicity of the ruler and by extension his subjects, or in geographical terms, such as *mamlekat* (kingdom) or *mamalek* (state provinces) or in the Mongol case, as an organisational unit with a spatial dimension, such as *ulus*.⁷

In general terms, we can identify two opposing concepts (or perhaps ideals) of government and models of ruling authority. First, a centralised, bureaucratic administration that sought to control and redistribute resources, in the service of a divinely endorsed dynastic ruler. Stephen Blake has described this as a 'patrimonial-bureaucratic' state.⁸ Secondly, a decentralised clan-based appanage state, sharing resources among the military or provincial elite, presided over by a khan who was generally recognised or acknowledged as chief or tribal senior.⁹ The Soviet scholar I. P. Petrushevsky refers to these respectively as 'a centralised feudal state together with a ramifying bureaucratic apparatus' and 'feudal disintegration together with a system of military fiefs'.¹⁰ The distinction between the two, however, may not always be so clear cut: especially in connection with the crucial question of succession – as noted by Robert McChesney, who gives a good description of the appanage state in what

was perhaps its most representative embodiment in post-Mongol Central Asia¹¹ (a region far removed from the Iranian heartlands with their long tradition of centralising bureaucratic rule). In this respect, the concentration of power in the hands of the Chinggisid khan(s) in the Mongol world tended to lessen the differences between the practice of government in the Ilkhanate and those of previous polities on the Iranian plateau.

In this chapter, I will address some of these points in the context of the Ilkhanate, focusing on three broad questions: 1) what was the situation that the Mongols encountered in the conquered territory? 2) what did the Mongols bring with them in terms of the practice of ruling? And, in particular, 3) what was the 'Idea of Iran' at that time, and what role did it play in the theory or practice of Mongol rule?

Pre-Mongol Iran

Iran in the late twelfth century and the first decades of the thirteenth was part of the dying remnants of the Abbasid caliphate. Western Iran was under the rule of a mosaic of provincial jurisdictions, themselves offshoots of the Seljuq state that had collapsed in Iraq in 1194 with the death of Tughril III. In Khorasan, after half a century of damaging rivalries between the Ghurids, Qarakhanids, Qara Khitay and the Khwarazmshahs, the latter had emerged under sultan Muhammad (1200-21) as rulers of the greater part of the whole region. In spite of his military success, his oppressive rule had a flimsy base; his support came largely from a section of his army and consisted of many pagan Qipchaq contingents. He seems to have done nothing constructive and in fact, his ambitious expansionism led to the removal of forces that could have served as a barrier against the Mongols. His sacking of cities (such as Samarqand in 1212) scarcely left them able to defend themselves.¹² As the immediately preceding power in Iran, the Khwarazmshahs thus hardly provided a model of good government or a coherent example of state formation: their empire was a purely militaristic construction. Nevertheless, the regime was served by professional bureaucrats such as the Joveyni family and 'Ala al-Din Joveyni does occasionally refer to positive aspects of the sultan's rule. On the occasion of his coronation, Joveyni optimistically remarked that 'the withered branches of the realm became fresh and verdant and the dead soul of justice returned to life and health'.¹³

One might look for a more coherent sense of the obligations of sovereignty under the Seljuqs, who were replaced in most of their realm by the Khwarazmshahs. Although theories of government abound (notably in the convenient formulation that religion and kingship are brothers, and in particular the acquiescence in the de facto seizure of power by military leaders), in practice the Seljuqs presided over the uneasy merging of steppe traditions with the norms of Perso-Islamic tradition: adherence to a commitment to bureaucratic government respecting Islamic principles, while also being

reminded (by administrators such as Nezam al-Molk) of ancient Iranian monarchical ideals.¹⁴ The Seljuqs themselves preferred the outdoor itinerant life of the steppe, and did not maintain a permanent capital city. Instead, they resided in military encampments, occupied with hunting and fighting – they provided, in fact, a foretaste of the situation under the Mongols.¹⁵ The latter came face to face with the Seljuqs only in Anatolia – following their victory at the battle of Köse Dagħ (1243) – and maintained the fiction of the rule of the sultanate of Rum until the early fourteenth century.¹⁶ The evidence of how the Ilkhans established their own bureaucratic apparatus in Anatolia, however, is revealing of the nature of Mongol rule both at the centre and in the provinces. The same can be discerned in the *atabegates* of southern Iran that also continued across the change of imperial government. But before we turn to this, we must ask: what was the ‘Idea of Iran’ at this time.¹⁷

First, I must reiterate a point I have made before. The famous Arab geographer, Yaqut al-Hamawi, fleeing before the Mongol invasions from the rich libraries of Merv, has no entry for ‘Iran’ in his geographical dictionary, the *Mo‘jam al-boldan*. He does include ‘Iranshahr’ (Eran-shahr), as an ancient term. He says that according to various authors, Iranshahr comprised the whole of Iraq, Fars, the Jabal and Khorasan and its centre was the Sawad. Its total extent was the heritage (*eqta*) of the sons of Iran b. Aswad b. Sam (Shem) b. Nuh (Noah), as allocated by Tahmuras, whom the Persians identify with Adam, according to one account. Or it was given to Iran or Iraj, the son of Feridun, according to another. While quoting various other opinions, Yaqut at no point refers to the current or later situation since the rise of Islam.¹⁸ Yaqut was writing between c. 1224 and his death in 1229. Iranian provinces and cities are mentioned individually, but the concept of Iran as a separate entity appears not to have existed on the eve of the Mongol invasions.¹⁹ The same can be stated and illustrated on the basis of maps of the Islamic world produced during the caliphal period.²⁰

Iran ‘did not exist’, at least, at the heart of things – indeed, little or no historical work was commissioned at the Seljuq courts that engaged with the Iranian past of their empire.²¹ In the provinces, however, there is evidence of the vitality of some aspects of pure Persian sentiment. Mazandaran is a case in point, where the local history of Ebn Esfandiyar (written before the Mongol invasions), records, among other things, the depiction of *Shahnameh* scenes on the walls of the palace of Hosam al-Dowleh and the recitation of the epic at night for his relaxation before sleep.²² A more striking example comes from the Shabankareh district in southern Iran, where the aged ruler Mozaffar al-Din Muhammad (d. 1260) recited apposite verses of the *Shahnameh* as he bound on his armour and his sword before charging into battle, perishing with the cry ‘in the spirit of *ghaza*’ on his lips:²³

بر آسودی از رزم یک روزگار	چنین گفت کای جوشن کارزار
به هر جای پیرایه بخت باش	کنون کار پیش آمدت سخت باش
نتابد همی خنجر کابلی	کنون چنبری گشت پشت بلی
وگر پیر گشتم دگر سان شدم	نه زان گفتم این کز تو ترسان شدم

He said, 'O chainmail of battle, you have rested a while from war,
Now there's work to be done, be strong; be a lucky ornament all round'
Now my hero's back is bent, my Kabuli dagger no longer gleams
I do not say this out of fear of you, or because I'm old or altered.

His grandson and successor, Nezam al-Din Hasan, also died in battle (in 1264), with verses of the *Shahnameh* on his lips.²⁴ We recall that a little later, in 1320, a poet called 'Saheb' composed the verse epic *Daftar-e delgoshā*, written in emulation of Ferdowsi. It celebrates the exploits of the Shabankareh khans, who claimed descent from Ardashir and beyond him to Faridun; and this continues up to the demise of Mozaffar. I will return to the *Shahnameh* later. As noted by Jean Aubin, the Shabankareh court had a dual culture: impregnated with both strict Sunni orthodoxy and ancient Persian tradition.²⁵ Different though comparable observations could be made about the Salghurid rulers of Fars, whose 'kingdom of Solomon' incorporated Pasargadae (Masjid-e Madar-e Soleyman) and Persepolis (Takht-e Jamshid), but who, as Turks, were the long-term enemies and rivals of the Shabankareh.²⁶ Similar influences can be discerned in the background of the Hazaraspid *atabeg* of Loristan, centred on the town of Izaj (Idhaj). There, the ruler, Nosrat al-Din Pir Ahmad (reg. 1296–1332) – who had spent some time as a hostage at the court of Arghun Khan, to guarantee the good behaviour of his brother, Afrasiyab b. Yusofshah – presided over a court that was deeply committed to generosity, justice and the welfare of the people. According to Shabankareh'i, 'in no century or age since kings of Iran-zamin have sat on the throne of the kingdom, has any great king placed their foot on the foot of the throne like him in good faith and goodwill towards the people'.²⁷ It is to him that the poet and author, Sharaf al-Din Fazl-Allah Qazvini dedicated a verbose history of the pre-Islamic rulers of Iran, from Keyumars to Anushirvan. Entitled *al-Mo'jam fi asar moluk al-'ajam*,²⁸ it is suggestive again of a persistent attachment to Iranian history. Apparently written at the *atabeg*'s request, its fulsome dedication includes titles such as 'the mightiest Padshah, the Shahriyar of the kings of 'Ajam, the Khosrow of Iran, heir [vares] of the Kayanian kingdom, the Jamshid of the Age [zaman], the Darius [or sovereign] of the time [Dara-ye dowran] ...'.²⁹

It is pertinent to note, as an aside, that the same *atabeg*, Nosrat al-Din, is the dedicatee of Hendushah b. Sanjar Nakhjovani's *Tajareb al-salaf*: a Persian translation of Ebn al-Teqtaqa's *Ketab al-Fakhri*, completed in 714/1314 and covering the dynasties that ruled Iran from the Prophet to the fall of the Abbasids. Hendushah proclaims Nosrat al-Din among other epithets as:

‘..vares-e soltanat-e Keyan ... khorshid-e dahr, Jamshid-e ‘asr’.³⁰ Sharaf al-Din’s work may have been commissioned at about the same date. It is an interesting example of the way that works of history originally written in Arabic were transmitted and thereby appropriated for Persian consumption in the Mongol period. Both examples also speak of the vigorous literary activity carried out in the provincial, and one would also consider rather insignificant, courts of south-western Iran, whose cultural achievements are frequently overlooked.

This discussion may seem remote from the topic of this chapter – Ilkhanid concepts of government and state formation – but it is important to recognise that the Mongols did not enter a void.³¹ The long-term collapse of centralised government on the Iranian plateau had paved the way for the proliferation of independent polities mostly, but not all, of Turkic stock, quite well entrenched at the peripheries of the Persian territories by the time the Mongols arrived. The destruction of the caliphate in 1258 dealt a further, mortal blow to the notion of a unitary Islamic Empire both in practice and, remarkably quickly, also in theory. Jurists in the Arab lands, such as Ebn Jama‘a (1241–1333), quickly recognised the legitimacy of rule acquired by force and that the religious sanction provided by the Caliph was unnecessary.³² Instead, they placed the ruler under the obligation of honouring and supporting the ulama. But while in many provincial regimes (such as the Shabankareh) the ulama retained their traditional position of respect (witnessed by the construction of mosques and the madrasa-like atmosphere of the court), we may also posit the overall undermining of their authority and influence in a society already increasingly secularised and militarised by the ruling classes, and possibly also threatened by the increasing popularity of Sufi shaykhs. Furthermore, as revealed by the sorry decline of Nishapur and the more recent self-destruction of the urban elites in cities such as Isfahan and Rey – which left the fabric of society as well as the cities in ruins – the religious establishment was itself prey to disastrous factionalism.³³

Thus the Ilkhans did not inherit a centrally administered empire and merely take over, or modify, the way it functioned. They encountered a fragmentation of power that they were perfectly able to exploit and, in some senses, to perpetuate. Even so, there was much to rebuild and plenty of different suggestions as to how to do so.³⁴ The pragmatism of the bureaucratic classes, for their part, was underpinned by a commitment to Islamic principles and a persistent attachment to Persian imperial tradition, which could now be appropriated to fill the ideological void left by the defunct Islamic caliphate.

Mongol Government

Turning to the Mongols and the establishment of the Ilkhanate after the fall of Baghdad in 1258, we note first the replacement of the caliph by the khan, as Nasir al-Din Tusi predicted, when asked what would happen if Hülegü

persisted in his ambitions.³⁵ Almost immediately, however, we also notice that his adoption of the title 'Ilkhan' or 'subject khan' around 1260 makes it clear that Mongol rule in Iran and Iraq was conceived as part of a larger whole, its legitimacy deriving from that of the Great Qa'an who in turn derived it from his descent from Chinggis Khan.³⁶ Unlike the caliph, the Ilkhan claimed no spiritual authority, but ruled by right of dynastic descent and military conquest. Hülegü's victory had created a new Toluid *ulus* (appanage), which took its place alongside the uluses of Chaghatay to the east and Jochi to the north. Though incorporated into the overall territory of the empire, the Toluid *ulus* would soon form what was effectively an independent khanate.³⁷

This essentially means, first, that the Ilkhans had no concept of forming a separate 'state'; and secondly, that the methods and institutions of rule already in place in the steppes and parts of Central Asia (and soon to be extended across the as yet unconquered regions of north China) were brought into Persia along with Hülegü. As David Morgan has convincingly argued on many occasions, the idea that the Mongols were not interested in ruling so much as enjoying their conquests, and were content to leave the business of government to the conquered peoples, is scarcely tenable in view of the detailed administrative arrangements already made by Chinggis Khan at the time of his 'coronation' in 1206 and the further measures introduced by Möngke Khan (reg. 1251–59) to ensure the effective collection and distribution of tribute, one of the main functions of the *yarghuchi* (judge, prosecutor).³⁸

Among these arrangements we may note the following, and notably the first: namely, the formation of a household that consisted of relatives of high-ranking families who had remained in Mongolia and whose jobs at court were hereditary. They were assigned army commands, provincial governorships, and special missions as envoys, bodyguards and judges – the importance and scope of which belied their sometimes humble titles (cook [*bavurchi*], shepherd [*qonichi*], parasol holder [*sukurchi*], falconer [*qushchi*], and so on). These figures were prominent at court and remained so throughout the period. Their communal identity was as members of the *keshig* (royal guard): an institution that retained its original character, derived from steppe society, and was the main vehicle of traditional Mongol government. As I have shown elsewhere,³⁹ it could absorb the most senior members of the bureaucracy – rather than the other way round. Rashid al-Din, for instance, was part of the *keshig* of the senior *noyan*, Qotloghshah. The earlier viziers, Sadr al-Din Zanjani and Sa'd al-Din Savaji, probably also became attached to these inner circles of government, with responsibility for signing decrees and so on. These and other administrators often rose to office from within the households of the *noyans* (amirs): Joveyni's fortunes were paired first with those of Sughunjaq Aqa. He later became a protégé of Buqa, a *qorchi* (quiver bearer) in Abaqa Khan's household who briefly became vizier himself under Arghun (and was executed in 1289). Sadr al-Din was promoted by the great amir Toghachar, and Sa'd al-

Din Savaji by Nurin Aqa. The factions that formed and the rapid swings of fortune that marked the early years of the Ilkhanate are charted in detail and with great sophistication by Jean Aubin in his remarkable study *Emirs mongols et vizirs persans*, which remains the outstanding reading of this period.⁴⁰

This association between *noyans* and bureaucrats is one aspect of a well-attested dual form of administration, inherited from China and carried over into the provinces, where a characteristic feature of Mongol rule was the appointment of both military and civilian officials. This resulted in a fragmentation and overlap of authority. The proliferation and duplication of posts was a major source of conflict in the provincial administration, exacerbated by the inconsistent use of titles and elasticity in the real nature of their functions – it was also a costly drain on resources, which inevitably had to be recovered by oppressive taxation. As at the centre, the multiplication of officials and their alleged incompetence, together with the insecurity of their posts, led to the formation of factions and the pursuit of private interests – a factionalism that was particularly damaging when it involved a rivalry between civilian officials. In Anatolia, Mongol *noyans* such as Samaghar and Abishqa often appear in the sources in a much better light than their civilian counterparts, with whom they were often at odds.⁴¹ The same rivalries plagued Fars, where first Inkianu (c. 1269) and later Sughunjaq *noyan* (1272–73, 1280) both acted firmly and judiciously to regulate the financial affairs of the province, only to fall from grace due to the schemes of the local officials and merchants who had suffered as a result of their scrupulous administrations.⁴²

Here, as elsewhere in the Ilkhanate, therefore, it would be misleading to suppose that Mongol rule and Mongol attitudes to government were universally oppressive and concerned only with enjoying the profits of their conquest, as against the bureaucratic vision of the Persian *divaniyan* to exercise of restraint and administer with justice. Rather, they were often partners in crime.⁴³ One might reasonably ask why this was so and perhaps, answer that Persian officials in the Mongol period were probably neither more nor less honourable and public-spirited than in other epochs, despite the high ideals to which they paid lip service in their historical writings and in the streams of ‘advice’ that flowed from their pens. The difference was that in the early Mongol period, local officials were not governed by the exercise of lofty principles at the centre. In the first place, the powers of the civilian officials were rather limited – essentially, they were no longer in charge – and secondly, they could have been encouraged by the example of their masters to look first and foremost to their own interests. In short, Mongol rule weakened concepts of the responsible exercise of power and fostered a corruption of government morality.

This is not to say that the ‘Perso-Islamic’ concept of government, based on the expectation of the exercise of justice as the paramount virtue, along with a central administrative and financial organisation, was totally silenced. It was set out early on by Nasir al-Din Tusi in his fiscal memorandum, probably written

for Abaqa Khan, in which he refers to the twin foundations of the state – the men of the sword and the men of the pen – and defines the ideal qualities of each. He also mentions the example of ‘just and equitable kings’.⁴⁴ Rashid al-Din in his portrait of Ghazan as the convert khan, reformer and reviver of the sharia as against the Mongol *yasa* (the Mongols’ military code governing issues of protocol and discipline), articulates the vision of a ruler committed to removing the worst abuses and protecting the populace from unsustainable taxation, even if he framed his arguments on pragmatic rather than humanitarian grounds.⁴⁵ Although the conversion of Ghazan Khan in 1295 was undoubtedly a turning point of sorts, and perhaps left both civilian and religious classes more empowered than before, the fact remains that the Mongols continued to rule according to their own lights and through their own institutions – such as the *keshig* – and that these lost none of their force. It is important to be sensitive to the fact that the contrary impression, presented by the chroniclers from Rashid al-Din onwards, contains a strong element of wishful thinking – and furthermore, that those chroniclers represent only one side of the story. The only way we can discern the Mongols’ own concept of the state is either from their actions or from the negative point of view recorded by their Persian subjects. Whether we consider Rashid al-Din’s *Letters* (*Mokatebat*) to be authentic or not – a question that has turned surprisingly polemical⁴⁶ – it is clear that they do not represent a Mongol concept of government and, at best, like other ‘Mirrors’, are exhortatory in the face of the opposite situation to that described. Nevertheless, the impact of Persianisation and Islamisation can be seen in the second half of the Ilkhanate. The later fourteenth-century satirist, ‘Obeyd-e Zakani (d. c. 1371), places an amusing and seemingly paradoxical gloss on the trajectory of Mongol rule:⁴⁷

When Hulagu Khan conquered Baghdad he ordered all the inhabitants who had escaped the sword to assemble in front of him ... He separated the judges, shaikhs, sufis, hajjis, preachers, noblemen, sayyids, beggars, religious mendicants, wrestlers, poets and story-tellers from the rest and ... by ordering them to be drowned in the Tigris, purified the earth of their vile existence. Consequently, sovereignty was firmly established in his family for about 90 years, and their prosperity increased daily. But since poor Abu Sa‘id was obsessed with the idea of justice and distinguished himself with this quality, before long the days of his monarchy were numbered, and Hulagu’s house and endeavours disappeared through the aspirations of Abu Sa‘id.

This wittily suggests that acculturation to Perso-Islamic norms weakened the authority and martial spirit of the Mongol elite – which contains a certain truth. But it could equally be argued (and perhaps have been intended sarcastically by ‘Obeyd) that it was in fact the Mongols’ failure to acculturate that undermined

their rule: they remained Mongols first and foremost and collapsed in the same way that they had governed.⁴⁸

The Idea of Iran

So much for a brief review of Mongol rule and some of its more salient characteristics, which could be taken to reflect the ideas of the governing elites circulating at the time. It is clear that at the very least, there were competing concepts that took a long time to harmonise; they were still unresolved by the late Timurid period.⁴⁹ Turning more specifically to the 'Idea of Iran', we might ask to what extent the concept of government or the identity of the State was linked to the concept of Iran, or conversely, whether the idea of Iran influenced the concepts underlying Ilkhanid government.⁵⁰ The first way to attempt an answer is through considering terminology; that is, what the state was called and how this related to its territorial identity.

As noted above, and by several scholars,⁵¹ the concept of Iran (former Eran-shahr) as a political entity disappeared from view after the collapse of the Sasanian Empire in the seventh century, although it remained a component of Iranians' 'national sentiment' that was most clearly preserved in the Persian language.⁵² In the fiscal treatise referred to above, Nasir al-Din Tusi refers to Iran as the *velāyat-hā-ye 'ajam* ('non-Arab' provinces). The same term is used in the *Akhbar-e Moghulan dar anbaneh-ye Qotb* (c. 1286) for the dispatch of Hülegü west to regulate the *velāyāt-e 'arab va 'ajam*.⁵³ For the conquering Mongols, the Iranian lands were an extension of the *ulus* of Tolui, whose descendants controlled the empire following Möngke's successful coup in 1251. Nevertheless, the question of legitimacy in the face of the claims of other Chinggisid *ulus*-holders in western Asia, compounded by the fact of its distance from the central Toluid territories in Mongolia and later China, made the designation unsatisfactory. Persian writers also needed a way to express the new situation and lost little time in reviving the term Iran, or *Iran-zamin*. The 'land of Iran' was now once more a distinct entity, even if part of a larger imperial polity; distinct, at least, from the Arab world and in theory, unified under one ruler.

Although the term *Iran* was used by Zeyn al-Din Gardizi (c. 1041), generally only when referring to pre-Islamic history,⁵⁴ the first writer in the Mongol period to do so, in the former sense of Eran-shahr, was Qadi Beyzavi (c. 1275) in the course of his *Nezam al-tavarikh*. In his preface he defined the Iranian lands as stretching from the Euphrates to the Oxus – or rather, from the Arab lands to the borders of Khojand.⁵⁵ Variations on this description are given by the later geographer, Hamd-Allah Mostowfi, and in the *Letters* of Rashid al-Din, for whom the '*mamalek-e Iran*' ran from the Oxus to the Jeyhan (in Cilicia) and from Egypt to the borders of Anatolia.⁵⁶

If these designations captured something of the physical limits of the Ilkhanate, and indeed of 'greater Iran' for the next few centuries, we may

suppose that the Mongols' view of their realm was of a conquered land and its extent was what they controlled either indirectly, or later more directly. The southern provinces were wrested from the control of the local powers in Shiraz (the Salghurids) before the end of the thirteenth century, and in Yazd and Kerman (Qotlogh-Khanids) in the early fourteenth. This was accompanied by central coinage issues that indicate some sense of a unified state. The Mongol ruling elite never went to southern Iran, except as agents on particular punitive or investigative missions; there is no record of any of the Ilkhans penetrating as far south as Isfahan. The court and the main military appanages were concentrated in northern Iran, in a wide swathe of territory stretching from eastern Anatolia to Khorasan and up into the Caucasus. It was within this zone that the Mongols moved around in a form of itinerant government that persisted into the reign of Abu Sa'id, who alternated his winter and summer quarters between Baghdad, the new 'capital' at Sultaniyya, and the Mughan plain. The itinerancy of the court indicates both a style of government and a particular relationship with the territory that defined the boundaries of the 'state'.⁵⁷

For the literati, Iran-zamin was not just a territorial but also a distinct political and cultural space – a space that not only recalled the glory of former Persian Empires, but also had a vibrant role in shaping Islamic civilisation. The Persianisation of the Mongols preceded their Islamisation, though neither process was complete by the end of the Ilkhanate. In his account of the previous (pre-Mongol) dynasties, Qadi Beyzavi stressed not only their justice but also their construction work, the founding of cities and restoring of agriculture; this sent a clear message for the Ilkhans to bring the devastated lands back under cultivation and repair the destruction their conquests had brought. Beyzavi was writing for Sughunjaq Aqa and Shams al-Din Joveyni, joint overseers of Fars, both of whom were committed to maintaining the prosperity of this southern province that had escaped the immediate disasters of Mongol attack. Many of Beyzavi's examples of 'just' kingship came from the Sasanian dynasty and it was in the same breath that he feted Hülegü and Abaqa (and later Ghazan) as paragons of justice and Islamic virtues.⁵⁸

The theoretical harmonisation of Iranian and Islamic tradition was accomplished by the conversion of Ghazan Khan in 1295, adopting the resounding title of 'Padshah-e Iran va Islam'. As Bert Fragner has noted, it was in this way that the notion of Iran was reinvented as a new regional power.⁵⁹ It should also be recalled, however, that this harmonisation was not new. In fact, it marked another step in the long process of the absorption of Iranian tradition into Islamic culture and the ideals of rulership.⁶⁰ Although 'Iran' had not existed as a political reality for centuries, it had survived in the collective consciousness. It is important for our topic to note that it was not the political reality of the Sasanian Empire that was recreated, in any sense other than its territorial contours, any more than in earlier periods of caliphal rule. There was no deliberate effort to revive Sasanian government as a model for Mongol rule

or to 'overthrow' Islam; rather, its symbolic image was appropriated for the purposes of legitimacy and propaganda. It was the 'cultural consciousness' of Iran that was reinvigorated by the Persian bureaucrats for their Mongol masters.

The single most powerful expression of this cultural consciousness was Abo'l-Qasem Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, completed around 1010, which became the main vehicle for the reinvention of Iran as a political force and a new historical reality. As I noted earlier in connection with the traditions of the Shabankareh,⁶¹ the *Shahnameh* remained a source of inspiration in some courtly milieus to an extent that belies the apparent disappearance of the epic from the literary scene in the two centuries since its completion. It is a work based on sources of great antiquity, with heroes and concepts recognisable from the *Avesta*. Organised as a narrative of pre-Islamic kingship, it presents the material compiled in the late Sasanian 'Book of Lords', the *Xwadaynamag*. Several versions of the work seem to have been composed before Ferdowsi brought them together in his verse epic: the most celebrated of these are the prose version of Abu'l-Mo'ayyad al-Balkhi, the *Shahnameh* of Abu Mansur (c. 958), and the lines composed by the poet Daqiqi, some or possibly all of which – especially those concerning the coming of Zoroaster – were incorporated into Ferdowsi's work.

Quite apart from its antiquity, the *Shahnameh* provided a model of Iranian kingship and courtly behaviour. It carries a didactic message about justice, honour and faithfulness, as well as the importance of noble blood and pure genealogy. It is not surprising, then, that Ferdowsi's work was championed by the Iranian bureaucratic elites to convey an image of the longevity and splendour of Iranian civilisation. Many scholars have discussed these uses of the *Shahnameh*,⁶² but Souren Melikian-Chirvani's work remains the most thorough exploration of the subject.⁶³ In a number of articles, he focuses on 'Ala al-Din Joveyni's use of quotations from the *Shahnameh* in his history of the conquests of Chinggis Khan (c. 1260) and on the passages from the epic found on the lustre tiles at the Mongol palace of Takht-e Soleyman – the construction of which, initiated already in the reign of Hülegü at what Melikian-Chirvani calls 'le Reims de la monarchie sassanide', is itself a highly symbolic act.⁶⁴

Joveyni quotes numerous verses from the *Shahnameh*, not so much for their didactic message as in order to assert the Iranian character of the violated lands of Iran and make sense of the Mongol assault not only in terms of God's will, but also in the context of the age-old hostility between Turan and Iran. As for the palace at Takht-e Soleyman, Tomoko Masuya has continued the investigation of the site and its decoration,⁶⁵ noting alongside others the strong influence of Chinese art forms and symbols that incidentally make it clear that the 'reinvented' Iran and its visual representation were forged in an environment strongly coloured by the Mongols' opening up of continental Asia to cultural and material traffic to and from the Middle and the Far East. She

also notes that the potters crafting tiles for Takht-e Soleyman (like the poets and writers of Mirrors for Princes-*cum*-chronicles, for that matter) were following an established tradition while also incorporating imagery of special significance to the Ilkhans.⁶⁶

As for the *Shahnameh* itself, it is hardly necessary to recall the florescence of the epic in a vigorous production of manuscripts of the text in the Mongol period. The first complete example appears to date from 1276:⁶⁷ hardly a coincidence, given the composition of Qadi Beyzavi's history at this time, and the dates on some of the tiles from Takht-e Soleyman. From around 1300, after the conversion of Ghazan Khan, illustrated copies of the epic began to proliferate, with several examples of apparently similar date being produced in Baghdad. Ghazan visited the city early in his reign, in Safar 696/December 1296, and on at least one other occasion.⁶⁸ The time and place of the production of these so-called 'Small *Shahnamehs*' is disputed,⁶⁹ but there is no doubt that they appear at a significant moment in Iran's turbulent history and give powerful visual expression to legends of ancient kings and heroes, clearly not forgotten, but dusted down and brought back to life as circumstances allowed. The fact that they were certainly produced after Ghazan's conversion and reflect a new upsurge of court patronage and official image creation, confirms the beginning of the transformation of Mongol rule, dateable to the turn of the fourteenth century – as is confirmed in other sources. The Ilkhanid *Shahnamehs* culminate in the so-called 'Great Mongol' (Demotte) *Shahnameh*, which has been the focus of so much scholarly attention, particularly in the context of its production and the significance of its iconographical cycles – and especially insofar as they might reflect contemporary events. Paintings illustrating the career of Alexander the Great (Eskandar), a previous 'world-conqueror', are particularly prominent.⁷⁰

Both the illustrations and the subject matter of Ferdowsi's epic are a testament to the reassertion of imperial and majestic power, while also depicting the violence of the times and the extent to which new, foreign elements had entered Iranian space, not least in ethnic terms, different peoples altering both Iran's material culture and the visual landscape. Southern Iran, and particularly Fars with its political capital, Shiraz, close to the ruins at Persepolis and Pasargadae, emerged as a prolific centre of manuscript production in the late Ilkhanid period. Under the patronage of the local Injuid dynasty (c. 1325–53), Shiraz continued to develop trends begun in the ateliers of Tabriz. An early focus on the *Shahnameh* soon gave way to the production and consumption of a broader set of texts, notably religious, as well as iconographies in different media that depicted the local ruler and his consort, echoing a similar prominence of women at the Ilkhanid court, as Abu Eshaq asserted his increasingly independent rule.⁷¹

Whether in Tabriz, Shiraz or later Baghdad, such an outpouring of sometimes heavily illustrated manuscripts clearly reveals more than just the

release of creative energy: this formative period of the Persian arts of the book signals a deep-seated attachment to the Iranian past as part of the cultural memory of these centres of former political splendour.

There is no need here to elaborate on this, but we may conclude by noting the use that Rashid al-Din (d. 1318) made of the pre-Islamic kings in his illustrated chronicle of the peoples with whom the Mongols came into contact, his celebrated world history, the *Jame' al-tavarikh*. He highlights the reigns of several of the mythical kings, such as Hushang, Tahmuras, Jamshid, Manuchehr, Lohrasp and others; but, interestingly, he does not quote from Ferdowsi's text, nor does he follow the *Shahnameh* narrative as his source for the period. Instead, his account is closer to that of Qadi Beyzavi in both language and content, thus preferring to emphasise a continuity of monarchical tradition and the idea that the Ilkhans were simply the latest in a long sequence of emperors who governed the Iranian plateau from Alexander onwards – the implication being that they would enjoy the same kingly glory as their predecessors. In short, it was the message, rather than the text, of the *Shahnameh* that was propagated by Rashid al-Din's *Jame' al-tavarikh*.⁷² It was a message that seems to have fallen on deaf ears, so far as his intended audience was concerned – but in reasserting the 'Idea of Iran' in the vacuum of post-Abbasid collapse it was a message that resonated strongly in Persian literary and artistic works for centuries to come.

To conclude, we might note that the construction of a royal image was essential for the consolidation of the power and legitimacy of a foreign conqueror, whether in Iran or elsewhere. An interesting parallel is the case of eleventh-century England, conquered first by the Danish Cnut in 1016 and the Norman William in 1066.⁷³ In the latter cases, it is the rulers themselves who seem to have taken the initiative in creating a new image, which largely involved generous and conspicuous patronage of the church. But in Iran, it was the administrators of the conquered realm who appear to have taken the lead in shaping a royal image that was consistent with local concepts. Furthermore, there was a need not only to embrace a new kingship, but also to reinvent the identity of the kingdom itself. This involved reclaiming the idea of Iran as an independent territory with historically-determined boundaries, a vibrant literary and artistic culture and an ancient tradition of imperial kingship. In both England and Iran, historians promoted the image of the idealised king as just and, ultimately, godly, while at the same time recording actions and events that indicated the reverse. But whereas in England as in Iran the conquered people were equally sceptical, the Mongol rulers themselves do not seem to have been overly impressed by the manner in which they were portrayed and took some time to embrace their allotted role.

The fundamental changes wrought by the Mongols in Iran, not only in the alienation of land from central control and in the exercise of political power, but also in the ensuing transformation of society – most notably, the alteration

in the religious landscape that empowered heterodox beliefs, the spread of popular Sufism and a preference for the type of spiritual (as opposed to legalistic) religious authority also associated with Imami Shi'ism – were not necessarily the result of a specifically Mongol conception of the state. It is also unlikely that the Mongols wished to emulate the character and organisation of the pre-Islamic Persian empires. Nevertheless, the transformations of the Ilkhanid era were to prove permanent, as was the creation of an idea that the Iranian lands were associated with a particular literary and artistic culture and ultimately, with a specific religious identity.⁷⁴ Whatever one considers the legacy of the Mongol invasions – still often viewed as purely destructive⁷⁵ – its most permanent aspect was the transformation of the idea of Iran from a purely 'cultural consciousness' into an enduring political reality.

Notes:

1. I am grateful to Sussan Babaie for proposing this as the topic of my contribution, though it is not what I would have chosen myself.
2. See Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).
3. Thomas T. Allsen, 'Technologies of Governance in the Mongolian Empire: A Geographic Overview', in David Sneath, ed., *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth–Twentieth Centuries* (Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University, 2006), pp. 117–40, esp. 118–27.
4. Bernard Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe*, transl. Juliet Vale (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), esp. pp. 66–153, and Jacques Le Goff, 'Le roi dans l'occident médiéval', in Le Goff, *Héros du Moyen Âge, le Saint et le Roi* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), pp. 1,075–119, are good places to start for a thorough discussion of kingship and the state in medieval Europe. See also Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville, "'Every Inch a King": Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds', in Mitchell and Melville, eds, *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 1–21, and the other papers collected there, for an effort to incorporate the Iranian world into the discussion.
5. For a fine exposition of this in the case of Safavid Iran, see Rudi Matthee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), for example pp. 197–215.
6. Walter Ysebaert, 'The Power of Personal Networks: Clerics as Political Actors in the Conflict between Capetian France and the County of Flanders during the Last Decade of the Twelfth Century', in Brenda Bolton and Christine Meek, eds, *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 165–83 (at p. 166). For a demonstration of this in the case of Iran, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 208–44.
7. See below, and n. 37. For a discussion of the situation in the Safavid period, see V. Minorsky, transl., *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk: A Manual of Safavid Administration* (fascimile, B.M. Or 9496) (London, 1943), p. 24. On whether Safavid Iran was a state, see Roger Savory, 'The Safavid State and Polity', *Iranian Studies* 7 (1974), pp. 179–212, and the comments of Hans Roemer, 'Das fruehsafawidische Isfahan: Als historische Forschungsaufgabe' ['Early Safavid Isfahan: As an Historical Research Project'], *Iranian Studies* 7 (1974), pp. 213–16. No doubt this issue will be discussed in a later volume in this series.
8. Stephen Blake, 'The Patrimonial–Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals', *Journal of Asian Studies* 39: i (1979), pp. 77–94.
9. For the fundamental importance of the concept of power-sharing and the redistribution of wealth as practised on the steppe, see Isenbike Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations: The Kerait Khanate and Chinggis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), esp. pp. 143–50, with a discussion of the 'new order' of concentrating power inaugurated by Chinggis Khan, while retaining a modified redistributive system.
10. I. P. Petrushevsky, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Conception of the State', *Central Asiatic Journal* 14 (1970), pp. 148–62 (at p. 148).

11. R. D. McChesney, 'Central Asia vi. In the 16th–18th centuries', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 5, fascicle 2 (1999), pp.176–93 (esp. pp. 176–8). See also R.D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480–1889* (Princeton: Princeton Legacy Library, 1991), pp. 46–60 (at n. 2), 149–51 and *Central Asia: Foundations of Change* (Leonard B. Poullada Memorial Lecture Series) (Princeton: Darwin, 1996), pp. 127–38.
12. For a masterful narrative of the political situation in Khorasan on the eve of the Mongol invasions, see C.E. Bosworth, 'The political and dynastic history of the Iranian world (A.D. 1000–1217)', in J.A. Boyle, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5. *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), esp. pp. 135–202; see also W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 4th edn (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 1977), pp. 323–80, 'The Qarā-Khitāys and the Khwārazm-Shāhs'.
13. 'Atā-Malek Joveyni, *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā, part II, Containing the History of the Khwārazm-Shāh Dynasty*, ed. Mirzā Muhammad Qazwīni (Leiden and London: Brill, 1916), p. 47, transl. J. A. Boyle as *Genghis Khan: The History of the World-Conqueror* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), p. 315.
14. Lambton, A. K. S. 'Justice in the medieval Persian theory of kingship', repr. in *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980), no. IV; see also Louise Marlow, *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. pp. 128–39. See now A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), esp. pp. 124–42.
15. See David Durand-Guédy, 'Where Did the Saljūqs Live? A Case Study Based on the Reign of Sultan Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad (1134–1152)', *Studia Iranica* 42 (2011), pp. 211–58, and Peacock, *Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 166–72.
16. See Charles Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', in Kate Fleet, ed., *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *Byzantium to Turkey 1071–1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 51–101.
17. See briefly, David Durand-Guédy, 'What Does the History of Isfahan Tell Us about Iranian Society during the Seljuq Period?', in Edmund Herzig and Sarah Stewart, eds, *The Age of the Seljuqs: The Idea of Iran*, vol. 6 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), pp. 58–73, at pp. 68–70. Durand-Guédy is the only author to address this topic directly in that volume.
18. Yāqūt al-Hamawī, *Mo'jam al-boldān* (ed. Beirut: Dar Beyrut, 1957), I, p. 289.
19. Already noted by Dorothea Krawulsky, *Iran, das Reich der Ilkhāne* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1978), pp.11–17, and her *Mongolen und Ilkhāne – Ideologie und Geschichte. Fünf Studien* (Beirut: Lattimore, 1989), in the Engl. ed., *The Mongol Ilkhāns and their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 43–51, 'The revival of the ancient name of Iran under the Mongol Ilkhāns'.
20. See Gerald R. Tibbetts, 'The Balkhī School of Geographers', in J.B. Harley and David Woodward, eds, *The History of Cartography*, volume 2, book one. *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 108–36, esp.114–23, and 'Later Cartographic Developments', pp. 137–55; the name 'Iran' still does not appear, even after the formation of the Ilkhanate. See also Cyrus Alai, 'Geography iv. Cartography of Persian', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 10, fasc. 4 (2000), pp. 444–8 and fasc. 5, pp. 449–56.

21. See A. C. S. Peacock, 'Court Historiography of the Seljuk Empire in Iran and Iraq: Reflections on Content, Authorship and Language', *Iranian Studies* 47 (2014), pp. 327–45. For a reassessment of earlier views on Seljuq historiography, such as those of J. S. Meisami, see 'Rulers and the Writing of History', in Beatrice Gruendler and Louise Marlow, eds, *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004), pp. 73–95.
22. Ebn Esfandiyyār, *Tārikh-e Tabarestān*, ed. 'Abbās Eqbāl (Tehran: Kulāleh-ye Khāvar, 1987); A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, A.S. 'Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin', *Studia Iranica* 17: i (1988), pp. 7–46 (at pp. 33–4, 45).
23. Shabānkāreh'i, *Majma' al-ansāb*, ed. Mir Hāshem Mohaddes (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1984), p. 165. This may be a literary conceit, as the four lines quoted come from three different parts of the epic: the first two verses are spoken by Rostam, preparing to fight Esfandiyyār – Jules Mohl, ed., *Shāhnāme* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1876), book 15, verses 3329–30. The third is part of Zal's speech to the Iranians, promising to take up arms again to defend the country after the death of Zav (book 10, verse 36), and the final line is contained in a message from Afrasiyab to Key Khosrow, attempting to deflect a combat (book 13g, verse 441)! There are a few minor variations from the text in Mohl's edition.
24. Shabānkāreh'i, *Majma' al-ansāb*, p. 169.
25. Jean Aubin, *Emirs mongols et vizirs persans dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 1995), p. 71.
26. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, 'Le Royaume de Saloman, les inscriptions persanes de sites achéménides', *Le Monde iranien et l'Islam* 1 (1971), pp. 1–41 (esp. pp. 3–20).
27. B. Spuler, 'Atabakān-e Lorestān', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 2, fasc. 8 (1987), pp. 896–8. See also the remarkable eulogy given by Shabānkāreh'i, *Majma' al-ansāb*, pp. 208–9.
28. See 'Aziz-Allāh Bayāt, *Shenāsā'i-ye manābe' va ma'ākhez-e tārikh-e Iran* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1377/1998), pp. 183–4 and sources there; C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature. A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, vol. 1, pt. 1 (repr. London: Routledge, 1970), pp. 243–4. The earliest surviving manuscript is dated 848/1444. The next entry in Storey's catalogue, interestingly, is another similar text produced at the court of a later *atabeg* of Loristan. For the poet, who also eulogised Ghiyas al-Din son of Rashid al-Din and was also a *monshi*, dedicating a collection entitled *al-Tarassol al-Nosratiyeh* to the *atabeg*, see briefly and dismissively E.G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature*, vol. 3. *The Tatar Dominion (1265–1502)* (repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 68, and Zabih-Allāh Safā, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e fārsi*, vol. 3, pt. 2 (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 2535 shah./1977), pp. 1,256–8.
29. Abo'l-Fazl Hoseyni Qazvini, *Ta'rikh al-Mo'jam fi āsār moluk al-'ajam*, lith. edn (Tehran: Kārkhāneh-ye Mollā Sāleh, 1294/1877), p. 15. For a different set of epithets, see Badī'-Allāh Dabiri-nezhād, *Āsār-e tārikhi-ye dowreh-ye moghul* (Isfahan: University Press, 1370/1991), p. 49.
30. See C. Melville, 'Ebn al-Ṭeqṭaqā', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 8, fasc. 1 (1997), p. 58; Hendushāh Sāhebi Nakhjuvāni, *Tajāreb al-salaf*, facs. ed. Amir Seyed Hasan Rowzāti (Isfahan: Nafā'es-e Makhtutāt-e Esfahān, 1361/1982) – see p. 267 for the date, pp. 2–3 for the dedication. The manuscript is dated, perhaps by chance, Muharram 846/June 1482 (see note 28, above).
31. See also Allsen, 'Technologies of Governance', p.118. The key question is, what were the characteristics of the politics the Mongols conquered or destroyed?

32. A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 138–43.
33. See Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 76–81. For Rey, see Yāqut, *Mo'jam*, vol. III, p. 117a (Yaqut passed through the city in 617/1220). See also W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, transl. Svat Soucek (Princeton: Princeton Legacy Library, 1984), pp. 123–4, for earlier examples. For Isfahan, see John E. Woods, 'A Note on the Mongol Capture of Isfahān', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36: i (1977), pp. 49–51 and nn. 11–12 for examples of earlier discord; also Yāqut, *Mo'jam*, I, p. 209a; Barthold, *Historical Geography*, p. 173.
34. See also Allsen, 'Technologies of Governance', pp. 124–7.
35. Rashid al-Din, *Jāme' al-tavārikh*, ed. M. Rowshan and M. Musavi (Tehran: Alborz, 1984), p. 1007.
36. On the title and the date, see Krawulsky, *Mongol Ilkhāns*, pp. 56, 59–62. She considers the Ilkhanate to have begun officially in 1264.
37. Peter Jackson, 'From Uluṣ to Khanate: The Making of the Mongol States c. 1220–c. 1290', in R. Amitai-Preiss and D. O. Morgan, eds, *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill 1999), pp. 12–38, esp. 28–32.
38. D. O. Morgan, 'Who Ran the Mongol Empire?', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1982, no. 1), pp. 127–36, and 'Mongol or Persian: The Government of Ilkhanid Iran', *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 3 (1996), pp. 62–76. For the reforms of Möngke, see also Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*; Yasuhiro Yokkaichi, 'The Role of *jaryuči* in the Structure of the Distribution System under the Mongol Empire', *Bulletin of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science – East Asia and Japan: Interaction and Transformations* 4 (2006), pp. 93–114.
39. Charles Melville, 'The Keshig in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household', in L. Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 135–64.
40. See Aubin, *Emirs mongols et vizirs persans*. By contrast, George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2003) paints rather a rosy picture of early Mongol Iran, largely because he takes the flattering sources at face value.
41. See Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', pp. 75–7, 83, 87, 88.
42. Denise Aigle, *Le Fārs sous la domination mongole. Politique et fiscalité (XIIIe–XIVe S.)* (Paris: Peeters, 2005), pp. 120–3, 126–8.
43. Aigle, *Le Fārs*, pp. 81–95, provides an excellent overview of Mongol rule ('le système mongol de domination').
44. V. Minorsky, 'Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī on Finance', in *Iranica: Twenty Articles* (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1964), pp. 64–85, esp. pp. 68, 69.
45. Petrushevsky, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Conception of the State' is based largely on the 'Letters', which he considers genuine, with echoes from other writings. See also Stefan Kamola, 'Beyond History: Rashid al-Din and Iranian Kingship' (this volume) for a discussion of Rashid al-Din's attempt to depict Öljeitü, rather than Ghazan, as the significant figure in the revival of sacral kingship in Iran.
46. See A. H. Morton, 'The Letters of Rashīd al-Dīn: Ilkhānid Fact or Timurid Fiction?', in Amitai-Preiss and Morgan, *Mongol Empire*, pp. 155–99; and Abolala Soudavar, 'In Defence of Raṣīd-od-Din and his Letters', *Studia Iranica* 32 (2003), pp. 72–120.

47. 'Obeyd-e Zākāni, *Akhlaq al-ashraf*, in M.-J. Mahjoub, ed., *'Obayd Zākāni: Collected Works* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1999), p. 243; Obeyd-e Zākāni, *The Ethics of the Aristocrats and Other Satirical Works*, transl. Hasan Javadi (Piedmont, CA: Jahan Books, 1985), p. 40.
48. See my article, 'The End of the Ilkhanate and After: Observations on the Collapse of the Mongol World Empire', in Bruno De Nicola and Charles Melville, eds, *The Mongols' Middle East: Continuity and Transformation in Ilkhanid Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 309–35.
49. See Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).
50. See the brief but clear discussion by Gronke, Monika, *Iran. A Short History. From Islamization to the Present*, transl. Steven Rendall (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2008), pp. 58–60, 'Concepts of rulership and empire'.
51. See above, n. 19, and especially the evolving formulations of Bert G. Fragner, 'Iran under Ilkhanid Rule in a World History Perspective', in Denise Aigle, ed. *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1997), pp. 121–31 (at p. 127–8); Fragner, 'The Concept of Regionalism in Historical Research on Central Asia and Iran (A Macro-Historical Interpretation)', in Devin De Weese, ed., *Studies on Central Asia in Honor of Yuri Bregel* (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Asian Studies, 2001), pp. 341–54 (at pp. 344–50); and Fragner, 'Ilkhanid Rule and its Contributions to Iranian Political Culture', in Komaroff, *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, pp. 68–80 (at pp. 71–3).
52. See the thoughtful essay by Shahrokh Meskoob in *Iranian Nationality and the Persian Language*, ed. J. R. Perry, transl. Michael C. Hillmann (Washington, DC: Mage, 1992). Meskoob contrasts Zarrinkub's 'two centuries of silence' before the political emergence of the (Arab) Tahirids, with the fact it took four hundred years for 'the Iranians to become a nation with a separate identity', a process that he dates, however, to the tenth century. Before that, the Iranians 'possessed cultural unity without political unity' (pp. 38, 31). E. Yarshater cogently argues for the non-disappearance of Iranian identity in 'The Persian Presence in the Islamic World', in Richard G. Hovannisian and Georges Sabagh, eds, *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 4–125, esp. pp. 54–85. Peter Christensen, *The Decline of Iranshahr: Irrigation and Environments in the History of the Middle East, 500 BC to AD 1500*, transl. Steven Sampson (Copenhagen: I.B. Tauris, 1993), provides an interesting account of the long-term history of the 'decline' of Iranshahr up to the rise of the Safavids.
53. Minorsky, 'Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī', p. 67; *Akhbār-e Moghulān dar anbāneh-ye Qotb*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Qom: Āyat-Allāh Mar'ashi-Najafi Library, 2009), p. 21: a work either written or copied by Qotb al-Dīn Shirāzi.
54. For example, 'Abd al-Hayy Gardizi, *Zeyn al-akhbār*, ed. 'Abd al-Hayy Habibi (repr. Tehran: Donyā-ye Ketāb, 1984), p. 544.
55. Charles Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqa: Qāḍī Baidāwī's Rearrangement of History', *Studia Iranica* 30 (2001), pp. 67–86 (at p. 76). See further, Charles Melville, 'The Mongol and Timurid Periods', in Charles Melville, ed., *Persian Historiography: A History of Persian Literature*, vol. 10 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), pp. 162–71, Section 1: 'A Sense of Place'.
56. Quoted in Petrushevsky, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Conception of the State', pp. 153–4; it scarcely, therefore, matches reality.

57. For the question of itinerancy, see Charles Melville, 'The Itineraries of Sultan Öljeitü 1304–16', *Iran* 28 (1990), pp. 55–70, and n. 15, above. The territorial dimensions of the Mongol presence have been charted by John Masson Smith Jnr, 'Mongol Nomadism and Middle Eastern Geography: Qishlāqs and Tūmens', in Amitai-Preiss and Morgan, *Mongol Empire*, pp. 39–56.
58. Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqa (Part II)', *Studia Iranica* 36 (2007), pp. 7–64, esp. pp. 18–19, 32.
59. Fragner, 'Concept of Regionalism', pp. 348–9; and especially 'Ilkhanid Rule', pp. 72–4, for what follows.
60. See D. G. Tor, 'The Long Slow Shadow of pre-Islamic Iranian Rulership: Antagonism or Assimilation', in Teresa Bernheimer and Adam Silverstein, eds, *Late Antiquity: Eastern Perspectives* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2012), pp. 145–63; she does not go beyond the Seljuq period, but the argument holds good for post-Abbasid times. Anticipated by Marlow, *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism*, pp. 66–90, 'The Muslim reception of Iranian models'.
61. As noted by Krawulsky, *Mongol Ilkhāns*, p. 46, Shabankareh'i was one of the few authors who used the term *Iran-zamin* in connection with the dynasties ruling Iran before the Mongol invasions.
62. Fragner, 'Concept of Regionalism', p. 349; Fragner, 'Ilkhanid Rule', p. 74; and earlier, Krawulsky, *Iran: Das Reich der Ilhane*, pp. 11–12. See more recently, Melville, 'The Royal Image in Mongol Iran', in Mitchell and Melville, eds., *Every Inch a King*, pp. 343–69.
63. Especially, 'Conscience du passé et résistance culturelle dans l'Iran mongol', in Aigle, *L'Iran*, pp. 135–77, summing up much of his earlier work.
64. Ibid., p. 137. Qādi Beyzāvi gives the reign of Hülegü as the start of the project – see *Nezām al-tavārikh*, Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, MS *Majāmi' tal'at* 394, fol. 22v, cited in Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqa (Part II)', p. 58. For a recent overview of the site, see Josef Wiesehöfer, 'The Changing Face of an Iranian Sacred Place: The Takht-i Sulayman', in R. Hillenbrand, A. C. S. Peacock and Firuza Abdullaeva, eds, *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran: Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia, Studies in Honour of Charles Melville* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), pp. 15–25.
65. See for instance, 'Ilkhanid courtly life', in Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan. Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New Haven and London: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), pp. 75–103, esp. pp. 84 ff., with references cited there; and Komaroff, 'The Transmission and Dissemination of a New Visual Language', in the same volume, esp. pp. 175–7.
66. Masuya, 'Ilkhanid Courtly Life', pp. 102–3. See Masuya, 'Images of Iranian Kingship on Secular Ilkhanid Tiles', in this volume.
67. British Library, MS Add. 21,103; the earliest incomplete copy, in Florence, dates from 1217, that is, immediately before the Mongol invasions, proof of an earlier manuscript tradition that is now entirely lost.
68. Rashid al-Din, *Jāme' al-tavārikh*, pp. 1,272, 1,288.
69. See Marianna S. Simpson, *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts* (New York: Garland, 1979) and more recently, A. T. Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting: The Evolution of an Artistic Vision*, ed. and transl. J. M. Rogers (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2008), pp. 5–29, with references, esp. 28–9.

70. See the classic study by Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Abolala Soudavar, 'The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahādor Khān: The Abu-Sa'idnāmē', in Julian Raby and Teresa Fitzherbert, eds, *The Court of the Il-khans 1290–1340*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art XII (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 95–218, further develops the contemporary significance of the scenes chosen for depiction. See also Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting*, pp. 15–26. For the Alexander cycle, see Robert Hillenbrand, 'The Iskandar Cycle in the Great Mongol Šāhnāmā', in M. Bridges and J. C. Bürgel, eds, *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great* (Bern: Lang, 1996), pp. 203–39.
71. Elaine Wright, 'Patronage and the Arts of the Book under the Injuids of Shiraz', in Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, pp. 248–68, and articles by Marianna Shreve Simpson and Eleanor Sims in the same volume. See more fully, Elaine Wright, *The Look of the Book: Manuscript Production in Shiraz, 1303–1452* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2012), esp. pp. 34–46, 283–6; and Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting*, pp. 26–7.
72. See Charles Melville, 'Rashīd al-Dīn and the *Shāhnāmeh*', in 'The Mongols and post-Mongol Asia: Studies in Honour of David O. Morgan', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26: i–ii (2016), pp. 201–14.
73. For example, Chris Dennis, 'Image-making for the Conquerors of England: Cnut and William I', in Bolton and Meek, eds, *Aspects of Power*, pp. 33–52. See also the article by Jean Dunbabin, 'Creating an Image for a New Kingship: Charles I of Anjou, King of the Regno', in the same volume, pp. 23–31.
74. I do not wish to stray into the slightly different, lengthy and absorbing discussions of Iranian nationality and nationalism, for which see for example two interesting and representative volumes: Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani, eds, *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave, 2012) and Ali M. Ansari, ed., *Perceptions of Iran: History, Myths and Nationalism from Medieval Persia to the Islamic Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).
75. See Anja Pistor-Hatam, 'History and Meaning in the Islamic Republic of Iran: The Case of the Mongol Invasion(s) and Rule', in Ansari, *Perceptions of Iran*, pp. 147–62.

Beyond History: Rashid Al-Din and Iranian Kingship

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In his history of the reign of Oljeitu Sultan (r. 1304–16), ‘Abdollah Qāshāni tells us that, in late January 1309, Razi al-Din Muhammad Abhari, the ‘Sultan of seyyeds and of naqibs’, dreamt of a group of prophets, whose company included a ‘saint of light’.¹ In the dream, Oljeitu, the ‘Sultan of the World’, approached and sat before the saint, who placed a ring on his finger, inscribed with glowing letters. Unable to read, Oljeitu turned to Abhari, who read on the ring a verse from the Qur’anic story of Solomon: ‘This is our gift, so grant or withhold without account’ (Q. 38: 39).

Abhari’s dream legitimises Oljeitu through a broad array of Islamic markers: a saint confers his blessing, which includes an appropriate passage of scripture, all of which is mediated by a prominent member of the Shi’i ulama. The dream addresses a central anxiety of the thirteenth-century Middle East: namely, the relationship between secular authority and Islam, after the dissolution of both the Seljuq empire and the Abbasid Caliphate. Subsequent Timurid and Safavid performances of sovereignty followed a new pattern of Perso-Mongol Islamic kingship, drawing on currents of Sufism, Mongol universalism, millenarianism, and Persian kingship and cosmology.² Unfortunately, narratives of Oljeitu’s reign, and particularly of the relationship between his exercise of power and his experience of Islam, tend to overlook the implications of Abhari’s dream, favouring instead a persistent image of Oljeitu as a religious dilettante whose spiritual life was as ecumenical as his name: Ghiyas al-Din Muhammad Nicholas Oljeitu Khodabanda.

The following pages reassess the first half of Oljeitu’s reign as a running experiment with new ways to express kingship in the Islamic world. Oljeitu was the first Mongol Muslim anywhere to succeed another Mongol Muslim. At least one local history identifies Oljeitu’s adoption of Shi’ism as the most important moment of Ilkhanid dynastic history, while remaining silent on Ghazan’s conversion.³ Despite these extraordinary circumstances, discussions of Islam in the Ilkhanate focus on Oljeitu’s elder brother Ghazan (r. 1295–1304), the converter king, and his role in redirecting the cultural and ideological tenor of the Mongol dynasty. In the words of Edward Browne,

Ghazan's conversion marked 'the definitive triumph of Islām over Mongol heathenism'.⁴ This might be compared to the visionary experiences of Constantine (r. 306–37) that dominate narratives of the Christianisation of Rome, even though many institutional and doctrinal aspects of the later Christian empire were established under his son Constantius II (337–61).

The imbalance in the treatment of the two brothers' religious lives is due in large part to modern attitudes towards Oljeitu's own moment of religious realignment, as he adopted Shi'i markers of state in early 1310. This 'conversion' to Shi'ism, which did not outlive Oljeitu's reign, holds up poorly against Ghazan's more paradigmatic conversion to Islam in the summer of 1295. Rather than seeing the events of 1310 as a failed conversion, the following pages show how the broader notions of Islamic sovereignty at play in Oljeitu's religious ideology prefigured later Timurid sacred kingship. To arrive at this conclusion, these pages examine the oeuvre of Rashid al-Din Tabib (d. 1318), the vizier, confidant and ideological standard bearer of both Ghazan and Oljeitu. By placing Rashid al-Din's theological works alongside his more famous historical writings, and viewing both within the historical context of their composition, we can better appreciate the significance of Oljeitu's embrace of Shi'ism, both for its own time, as well as in the emergence of a new articulation of sovereignty.

Islam, Authority and Ideology

Islam does not lend itself easily to ideas of sacral kingship.⁵ The strict monotheism at the heart of Muhammad's message, combined with his denial of any share in divinity and his claim to be the final prophet, established a clear delimitation between political leadership and divine grace. There is nothing in the scriptural basis of Islam comparable to Chinese ideas of the son of heaven, Egyptian associations of pharaohs with living gods, or Chalcedonian Christology, which provided a model for the twinned nature of Western European kings.

This does not mean that sacrality was never applied to the figure of the caliphs and, after them, to the various sultans of the Islamic world. In the earliest article about Islam and sacred kingship, H. Ringgren shows how panegyric poetry, rather than legal or theological scholarship, introduced ideas of sacrality to the Umayyad and 'Abbasid courts.⁶ Aziz al-Azmeh subsequently demonstrates that the understanding of the caliph as the deputy, not only of Muhammad but also of God (*khalifa allāh*), developed in congruence with the Shi'i idea of the imamate, a much more explicit expression of divine indwelling in the corporeal world.⁷

The decline of caliphal authority between the tenth and twelfth centuries opened new channels for understanding and expressing authority in the Islamic world, and these left their imprint on later Perso-Mongol modes of kingship. In the outward practice of politics, this is most evident in the various states, most

notably the Buyid and Seljuq, which held military power and independent royal grandeur alongside the attenuated caliphate. These military patronage states initially gained their sanction from caliphal writ, but their claims to authority gradually assumed religious aspects quite independent of Baghdad. The efforts of Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā al-Suhrawardī to apply a political doctrine nascent in his Illuminationist philosophy to the exercise of political power in Ayyubid Aleppo earned him his execution, and his moniker al-Maqtul.⁸ In other places, particularly in eastern Iran, where caliphal authority was especially weak, Sufism provided a model of social stratification, at the top of which sat an elite class of saints with access to special mystical knowledge.⁹ In the early thirteenth century, even the caliph al-Nasir (r. 1180–1225) turned to ‘Omar al-Suhrawardī’s model of brotherhoods, in an attempt to reinvest his own office with secular potency.¹⁰

As with the caliphal court poetry, ideas of saintly kingship in the Timurid and Safavid periods were transmitted through the heroic epics and royal portraiture of the period.¹¹ Even if caliphal and Timurid approaches to sacral kingship share in the popular media of their message, they are separated by the great historical gulf of the loss of the Caliphate itself. Concomitant with the ultimate fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, the Ilkhanate was a period of rich intellectual foment, in which numerous nascent strands of thought came to maturity.¹² From the theosophy of Ibn ‘Arabi to the Shi‘i theologies of ‘Allāma al-Helli and Qutb al-Dīn al-Shirāzi, the thirteenth century gave birth to some of the most defining formulations of Iranian Islam. In this formative period of Islamic theoretical sciences, it is no surprise that ideas of saintly kingship appear not only in popular media, but even in theology. Rashid al-Dīn’s theoretical works, justly considered insignificant in the realm of theology, prove that, in the vacuum left by the Seljuq and Abbasid states, ideas of divine indwelling and of inspiration associated with post-prophetic, secular rulers could be discussed in formal Islamic settings, despite their seeming incompatibility with prescriptive orthodoxy.

The accelerated pace of religious theorizing in the Mongol Middle East was the result of two major factors: the loss of institutions of authority (including the Caliphate and the Seljuq state, but also the effective end of Ismaili and Khwarazmian assertions to power), and the fact that the Mongol conquests had brought Iran and Iraq under infidel rule for the first time since the rise of Islam. In this atmosphere, the conversion of the Mongol sovereigns to the faith of their subjects has unsurprisingly attracted significant attention, as the great watershed of Ilkhanid history. As previously mentioned, Ghazan’s conversion in 1295 has drawn particular attention. One consequence of this focus on Ghazan’s conversion is the underdeveloped appreciation of how other Mongols contributed to the formation of a new relationship between secular authority and Islam. We have some understanding of Ahmed Tegüder’s role in this, a role intentionally suppressed in Rashid al-Dīn’s presentation of Ilkhanid

history, as well as the impact that conversion among non-royal Mongols had on Ghazan's decision to embrace Islam.¹³

Probably because of the monumental role of conversion in scholarship on religion in the Ilkhanate, discussions of Oljeitu's religious experience also tend to concentrate on his adoption of Shi'ism as the state religion in early 1310. However, his son and successor Abu Sa'id (1316–35) returned the dynasty to rigorously Sunni lines, and Ibn Battuta even suggests that Oljeitu retracted his conversion late in life.¹⁴ As a failed conversion, Oljeitu's embrace of Shi'ism provides further evidence of his religious insincerity. A different image of Oljeitu emerges, however, when we view the religious experience of the two brothers within the context of fourteenth-century Iranian Islam.

The heterodoxy of fourteenth-century Islamic faith and practice, including highly divergent practices that we now fit under the rubrics of Sufism and Shi'ism, has been termed 'popular', in distinction to the 'high' Islam of orthodox scholarship.¹⁵ To understand the religiosity of Ghazan and Oljeitu, however, we must understand that this popular mode was the primary experience of Islam for much of the population, and that it permeated even the highest levels of the royal family. However, although Oljeitu almost certainly converted at the same time as Ghazan, the two brothers had very different early experiences with Islam.

Both Ghazan and Oljeitu were born in Mazandaran, where their father Arghun was serving as governor during the reign of his father, Abaqa. From an early age, however, Ghazan was raised in Abaqa's mobile court in western Iran.¹⁶ He served as governor of the eastern provinces during the reign of Arghun, who was a committed opponent of Islamisation. By contrast, after spending the first years of his life in Khorasan and Mazandaran, Oljeitu served as governor of the eastern reaches of the Ilkhanate only after Ghazan took the throne and converted the dynasty formally to Islam. Thus, Oljeitu's early exposure and conversion to Islam occurred in a region where Sufi communities, centred on the shrines of charismatic shaykhs, played a significant role in religion, society and politics.¹⁷ The impact of this experience on Oljeitu can be seen, among other places, in his choice to name three of his sons after the ninth-century renunciant Bāyezid Bestāmi, who gained significant renown for his ecstatic utterances, pronounced directly in the voice of God.¹⁸

While Oljeitu was particularly steeped in eastern charismatic Sufi traditions, both brothers engaged with popular practice by adopting the custom of visiting shrines for blessing. Rashid al-Din reports that Ghazan visited the shrines of Bāyezid Bestāmi and Shaykh Abu Sa'id-e Abu'l-Khayr (d. 1049), among others, and that the experience inspired him to build his own complex of endowed charitable institutions at Tabriz, including his own tomb.¹⁹ In turn, Oljeitu made almost annual visits to his brother's tomb in the early part of his reign, including at least two visits during his first year on the throne.²⁰ Oljeitu's

own tomb complex at Sultaniya remains the most important surviving architectural achievement of the Ilkhanid period.²¹

To summarise: in a context of heterodox Islamic practice, heightened anxiety over the religious allegiance of the new Mongol rulers, and the fever pace at which Islamic theology and philosophy developed during this period, we should expect the historical and theological writings of Rashid al-Din to engage with various developing strands of thought, in order to establish his patrons' right to rule as Mongols, in the Islamic world. Because of the difference between the two brothers' individual experiences, including the fact that only Ghazan could claim the mantle of the converter king, Rashid al-Din presents a different ideological program for each brother. While Ghazan emerges in the historical writings as the vessel of God's work in the world, the theological works assign Oljeitu a much more active – even prophetic – role as the divinely inspired sultan, which anticipates Timurid and Mughal practice.

The Works of Rashid al-Din

Rashid al-Din is, of course, most famous for his dynastic history of the Mongols, the *Tārīkh-e Mobārak-e Ghāzāni* (*Blessed History of Ghazan*), which he prepared for Ghazan, and completed in the early months of Oljeitu's reign. Given its importance for historical research, it is remarkable that the *Blessed History* is Rashid al-Din's earliest work. Oljeitu commissioned a supplemental volume, containing a history of the world and of his own reign. These two volumes, along with a third that has not survived, containing a gazetteer of the world, constituted the original *Jāme al-Tavārikh* (*Collection of Histories*), which Rashid al-Din presented to Oljeitu in the spring of 1307.²² Under Oljeitu, Rashid al-Din also produced several works on theoretical and scientific matters. A collection on agronomy and another of translations from Chinese medical texts have survived, neither in its intended form. They need not concern us here.²³

Theology dominates Rashid al-Din's non-historical writings, to such an extent that Zeki Velidi Togan characterised him as having shifted from concerns of state to those of faith and philosophy with the change in imperial patron.²⁴ Born Jewish, Rashid al-Din converted to Islam probably around 1280, when he was about thirty years old.²⁵ In fact, he was not a particularly likely candidate to become an Islamic theologian at all. The chronology of Rashid al-Din's work shows that, contrary to Togan's assertion, his historiography and theology developed alongside one another as complimentary strands of an intellectual program deeply invested in matters of both state and spirit. The treatises contained in Rashid al-Din's first two theological collections, the *Ketāb al-Towzihāt* and *Miftāh al-Tafāsir*, were written before 1307, when the original *Jāme al-Tavārikh* was presented. A court audience on 14 March of that year inspired Rashid al-Din's third theological collection, the *Ketāb al-*

Sultāniya.²⁶ The earliest extant manuscript of his fourth theological collection, the *Latā'ef al-Heqā'eq*, is dated to the following year.²⁷

In subsequent years, Rashid al-Din began to combine his various works into increasingly grand collections. He assembled his four theological collections into a single compendium, the *Majmu'a-ye Rashidiya*, the Persian original of which, dated 1308, has remarkably survived.²⁸ Two years later, an Arabic copy of the *Majmu'a* was produced. It included a plan for a monumental collection of Rashid al-Din's entire oeuvre, titled the *Jāme' al-Tasānif al-Rashidi*. This plan, amounting to Rashid al-Din's autobiobibliography, reveals that the historical compendium the *Jāme' al-Tavārikh* now included a fourth volume, consisting of a genealogical tree of all the dynasties treated in the work. Furthermore, in addition to the collections on agrarian and medical sciences already mentioned, the proposed *Tasānif* was to include a further collection of theological treatises: the *Bayān al-Haqā'eq*. The *Bayān* contains treatises dated between October 1309 and September 1310. It is thus exactly contemporaneous with Oljeitu's embrace of Shi'ism and deserves special attention (see below) in considering the relationship between this moment of conversion and the broader ideology of Oljeitu's reign.²⁹

Rashid al-Din's theological works place him within the Shāfi'i school of jurisprudence, though he wears this allegiance lightly, deviating significantly from mainstream Shāfi'i doctrine.³⁰ His main concern is not with sectarian allegiance, but rather with the use of theology to resolve conflicts that had divided Oljeitu's court and the Islamic community. To do this, he had to establish the possibility of a new and synthesised interpretation of Islamic theology, through the practice of independent reason (*ejtehād*). Rashid al-Din begins his claim to *ejtehād* in his very first theological collection, the *Towzihāt*. This collection opens with one treatise on created beings and three dealing with the limits of human knowledge, after which Rashid al-Din addresses sura 109, the sura of the Infidels.³¹ In this treatise, Rashid al-Din rejects the doctrine of abrogation, by which one verse of the Qur'an is thought to supersede a contradictory earlier verse. The Qur'an, Rashid al-Din argues, is eternally valid and its inconsistencies can be rectified with proper study. As Dorothea Krawuslky has noted, this position contravenes Shāfi'i jurisprudence, which accepts the doctrine of abrogation.³² Instead, Rashid al-Din stakes out a maximalist interpretation of Islamic revelation, which can be understood through the application of *ejtehād* by qualified scholars such as himself. At least some of Rashid al-Din's contemporaries took his hint on this: several of the endorsements (*taqrizāt*) that he solicited to attest to the orthodoxy of his work declare him a *mojtahed*.³³

In the *Miftāh*, Rashid al-Din criticises both Mutazilite and literalist Sunni theologians (including, presumably, his Shāfi'i colleagues) as having upset the balance between reason and tradition in Islamic thought.³⁴ In place of these approaches, Rashid al-Din advocates two schools of theology. First, Rashid al-

Din refers to al-Ash'ari (d. 936) as the 'greatest authority for Sunnis and the collective' (*muqtadā ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*). Second, he identifies the Shi'i theology of his contemporary 'Allāma al-Helli (d. 1325), whom Rashid al-Din credits with having reopened the possibility of *ejtehād*. By invoking Ash'ari alongside the preeminent contemporary Shi'i scholar, in disregard of his purportedly Shāfi'i allegiance, Rashid al-Din crucially offers a model of discursive reasoning not only for Sunni Muslims, but for the entire Islamic community.

The central concept underpinning this new synthesis is the Arabic term *jam'*, with its semantic implications of universality and consensus.³⁵ This same term (perhaps coincidentally) connects the titles of his various collections of writings: the historical *Jāmi' al-Tavārikh*, the theological *Majmu' a-ye Rashidi*, and the monumental *Jāmi' al-Tasānif al-Rashidi*. All these collections demonstrate an encyclopaedic impulse to collect and standardise knowledge, pursued under the same semantic marker as the unified Islamic theology put forth in the *Towzihāt* and *Miftāh*.

Rashid al-Din's support of the Shi'i theology of 'Allāma al-Helli, along with his own efforts at original Qur'anic interpretation and his invocation of the divine emanation (*al-faiz al-ilāhi*) of God has led some to see in Rashid al-Din himself proclivities towards Shi'ism.³⁶ However, even as Rashid al-Din was expressing these opinions, he was simultaneously gathering testimonies to the orthodoxy of his early writings from the Sunni ulama and he continued to promote Sunni figures at court, including the *qādi al-quḍāt* Nizām al-Din. Instead of seeing Rashid al-Din as a Shi'i sympathiser, we can best understand his inclusion of emanationist doctrine and praise for 'Allāma al-Helli as attempts to open a discursive space within Islamic theology for a new, inclusive brand of Islam.

In his later works, Rashid al-Din claims an even greater role for himself: not just as a *mojtahed*, but as the great theological mind of the age, the centenary *mojaddad*, or renewer of Islam. Throughout his theological writings, he regularly cites the works of the previous *mojaddads* Abu Hāmed Ghazālī (d. 1111) and Fakhr al-Din Rāzi (d. 1209).³⁷ More explicitly, in the *Towzihāt*, Rashid al-Din compares himself to Ghazālī, citing the envy that each man's prominence attracted, and uses Ghazālī's self-defence against his detractors as a way to refute his own.³⁸

Rashid al-Din implicitly associates himself with Fakhr al-Din Rāzi, by presenting many of the treatises in his *Latā'ef* in the same question-and-answer format as Rāzi's influential *Munāzarāt* (*Controversies*). Like his predecessor, Rashid al-Din answers questions posed by others, contrasting himself with those unable to answer those questions. In the first treatise, Rashid al-Din relates being presented with the age-old 'chicken or egg' causality dilemma by a group of *bakhshis* (presumably Buddhist monks and/or shamans) at Oljeitu's court.³⁹ Though all others had failed to answer the question, Rashid al-Din

states that God revealed the answer to him, in an analogy to the createdness of Adam. By comparing his own position to that of Ghazālī and Rāzī, Rashid al-Din claims the right to reinterpret Islamic doctrine in thoroughly original ways. Writing in 1312, Vassāf validates this assertion by including Rashid al-Din in his list of *mojaddads*, right after Ghazālī and Rāzī.⁴⁰

The Accidental Illumination of Ghazan Khan

Ghazan's conversion to Islam, in the summer of 1295, is known mainly through the *Blessed History*.⁴¹ This work portrays Ghazan's rule as the fulfilment of God's plan for Islam, and the restoration of divine order after centuries of infidelity and chaos. As a precedent for this, in a lengthy passage at the opening of the work, Rashid al-Din explicitly compares his patron to the prophet Abraham.⁴² In the Qur'an, Abraham is particularly noted for rejecting the idolatry practiced by his kin (Q. 6: 74–83; 21: 51–70; 26: 69–89; 29: 16–27; 43: 26–28), making him an appropriate archetype for Rashid al-Din's narrative of Ghazan's spiritual evolution.

That evolution can be traced across three passages in the portion of the *Blessed History* dedicated to Ghazan's life and reign. In addition to the conversion scene itself, the account of Ghazan's youth depicts the prince's early religious education and predisposition towards Islam.⁴³ Near the end of the work, the first of forty anecdotes describing Ghazan's character and administration briefly revisits both Ghazan's youth and conversion, summarizing the two earlier passages.⁴⁴ Taken together, these three passages tell a story of how, as a young child, Ghazan lived in the retinue of his grandfather, the Ilkhan Abaqa, who entrusted the boy's education to a series of *bakhshis*. The prince's outward support of Buddhism, demonstrated by his building of temples in Khabushan, was tempered by his innate curiosity to understand divine mysteries, so that by 1295, when Amir Nowruz suggested that he convert, Ghazan could respond that the idea had long been on his mind. In Rashid al-Din's account of the conversion, a divine light descends into Ghazan's breast, after which the prince denounces the error of idolatry. In both places where this speech is related, Rashid al-Din ends his account with the assertion that Ghazan's conversion was evidently sincere, despite the existence of contrary opinions.

The ideological force of this conversion narrative becomes evident when we consider an alternate version of the early life of Ghazan that survives in at least five manuscript copies of the *Blessed History*.⁴⁵ This version, here called the P variant, after the letter assigned by twentieth-century editors to its most prominent witness, follows the main text for most aspects of Ghazan's life.⁴⁶ It is a less succinct text, which includes numerous details about the staffing of Ghazan's administration while he served as governor in Khorasan. These details give insight into Ilkhanid administrative practices, but they have been pruned from Rashid al-Din's more streamlined main version of the text and

need not further concern us here. Similarly, the P variant includes several episodes assigning a prominent and positive role to Amir Nowruz in Ghazan's early administration. Such a depiction is hard to reconcile with the fact that Nowruz was anathematised and his family and followers purged in 1297.⁴⁷

Of greater significance here is how the P variant handles the scene of Ghazan's conversion. It deviates from the main text more here than anywhere else – with the exception of the wholly new episodes featuring Nowruz. There is no mention of the event as the fulfilment of God's plan, and Ghazan's childhood training by *bakhshis* at Abaqa's court is reduced to a passing mention. Instead, the P variant depicts the conversion as a Sufi initiation rite, instigated by Nowruz. In its outline, it follows an account preserved by the Mamluk chronicler al-Jazari, who claims as his source Shaykh Sadr al-Din Hammuya, who presided at the conversion.⁴⁸ It is also noteworthy that the P variant of Ghazan's conversion opens with a consultation between the prince and his amirs, resulting in the decision to convert to Islam as an expedient choice, in order to defeat Baidu. This bald admission of a *realpolitik* motive for the conversion has naturally been scrubbed from the main version of the *Blessed History*, but its residue can be seen in the various assertions that Ghazan's conversion was indeed sincere. In fact, in the third passage in which Rashid al-Din discusses Ghazan's conversion, he insists that, while some people believe Ghazan's conversion was the result of coercion by amirs and shaykhs, close investigation has proved them to be wrong.⁴⁹ This apologetic moment in Rashid al-Din's main text tacitly acknowledges the account preserved by the P variant and by Jazari, an account that also influenced Banakati and perhaps even Vassaf.⁵⁰

In sum: Rashid al-Din's polished portrayal of Ghazan's spiritual evolution downplays its political context and its form as a Sufi initiation rite. Instead, it emphasises Ghazan's penchant for monotheism, a characteristic shared, in the *Blessed History*, by Abraham and Oghuz Khan.⁵¹ It also emphasises the fulfilment of God's plan for Islam and, more broadly, God's involvement in world affairs. Significant in this regard is the nature of the light that descends into Ghazan's heart at the moment of his conversion. In the P variant, Ghazan receives the sense of *tawhid* and his breast becomes a storehouse of mystical knowledge, imagery consistent with the Sufi-inflected presentation of the conversion. These details have been toned down in the streamlined main version, which emphasises instead the descent of *sakina* into Ghazan's breast. This term, with its sense of divinely bestowed tranquillity, appears most prominently in the Qur'anic sura of victory, traditionally associated with Muhammad's return to Mecca with his followers (Q 48: 4; 48: 26). This provides a fitting analogy from early Islamic history to the circumstances of 1295, subsuming the political context of Ghazan's conversion into an Islamic context by equating the Mongol prince's rebellion against Baidu with the eventual triumph of Muhammad over the disbelievers of Mecca.

The concept of *sakina* allows Rashid al-Din to invoke ideas of divine indwelling in the world and in individuals: an important aspect of contemporary ideas in Illuminationist philosophy, Shi'ism and Sufism. The *Blessed History* also attests to this idea of Ghazan's body as the site of divine presence in its description of the building of Ghazan's tomb at Shamb, in Tabriz. Asked by the builders how many windows they should leave in the dome to let in light, the Ilkhan responds in a way that has puzzled translators: 'the light there should come from here, otherwise the accidental illumination (*rowshanā'i-ye ārezi*) of the sun in that place is of no benefit to anyone'.⁵² The key to understanding this remark is the idea of accidental (*ārezi*) illumination, a term that Suhrawardi al-Maqtul employs to distinguish physical light from the spiritual enlightenment of the wise sage or ruler.⁵³ In other words, the number of windows in the dome would not affect the quality of spiritual light emanating from the presence of Ghazan himself.

For Rashid al-Din, then, Ghazan's conversion serves to show God working through the Mongol prince at that moment. There are similarities with Eusebius of Caesarea's account of Constantine's vision of the *chi-rho* and his subsequent victory at the Milvian Bridge in 312. While not a moment of conversion *per se*, this was a key turning point in the rise of a young prince to the imperial throne. Eusebius allegorises it, using a Biblical precedent (Moses' delivery from Egypt) and casts it as a paradigmatic moment in the conversion of a non-Abrahamic state to monotheism, just as Rashid al-Din does in Ghazan's case. Having thus ascribed the mantle of converter king to Ghazan, Rashid al-Din had to resort to different frameworks to express the Islamic credentials of Ghazan's brother and successor, Oljeitu.

The City of Knowledge and Its Gate

We lack a narrative history of Oljeitu's reign which matches the *Blessed History of Ghazan* in its ideological force. Instead, of course, we have Qāshāni's *Tārikh-e Oljeitu*, which, with its annalistic structure and precise dating of events, presents itself as a reliable account of Oljeitu's reign.⁵⁴ However, Qāshāni is not above distorting his chronology for particular political aims.⁵⁵ In fact, the lists of dated events that bookend particular years in the chronicle often serve merely as a framework within which the author embarks on literary set-pieces with broader chronological horizons.

One of Qāshāni's longest set-pieces is his account of Oljeitu's spiritual evolution, including his embrace of Shi'ism, all of which falls within his account of the events of the hijra year 709 (beg. 11 June 1309).⁵⁶ The narrative opens with a mention of Oljeitu's visit to the tomb of 'Ali in early 1310, at which point he adopted the Shi'i *khotba* and *sekka*. After thus establishing the narrative's destination, Qāshāni jumps eight years back in time: to 702/1302–03, when a descendent of 'Ali was killed as a result of sectarian conflict during Friday prayers in Baghdad. In response, Ghazan (who was still Ilkhan) ordered

freedom of religious practice for all sects, citing as examples the tolerant policies of Muhammad and Chinggis Khan. While relieving sectarian tensions and learning about the family of 'Ali and Fātima, Ghazan became particularly partial to the *ahl al-bayt*. Qāshāni suggests that Rashid al-Din only prevented Ghazan from converting to Shi'ism at that time by convincing him to first complete his conquest of Syria.⁵⁷

The central episode of this conversion narrative is a religious debate between Hanafi and Shāfi'i scholars at Oljeitu's court in 1306.⁵⁸ This episode has become famous less for the content of the dispute than for Amir Qutlughshāh's reaction:

What have we done that we have set aside the new *yasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan and taken up the ancient religion of the Arabs that is divided into seventy-odd sects? And the choice of either of these schools is a disgrace and an infamy, in that one of them allows marriage to one's daughter, and the other to one's mother and sister-in-law, God forbid either! We ought to return to the *yasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan.⁵⁹

This outburst has been read as the frustrated screed of a conservative Mongol, struggling to come to grips with the religion of the subject Muslims.⁶⁰ Read within the narrative of Oljeitu's spiritual evolution, however, it establishes the Sunni schools as a foil for the sultan's eventual embrace of Shi'ism.⁶¹

After Qutlughshāh's exasperated outburst, according to Qāshāni, the preferred mode of incest became a humorous litmus test for identifying one's allegiance to Hanafi or Shāfi'i jurisprudence. This continued for several months until Oljeitu launched his campaign into Gilan, during which a lightning strike killed several members of the royal household. As a result, Oljeitu's faith was shaken and he was encouraged by *bakhshis* to reject Islam, which had evidently incited the wrath of heaven. In the end, Amir Taramtāz informed Oljeitu that Shi'ism, while considered heretical by some, was at least a heresy that aligned with the *yasaq* of Chinggis Khan.⁶² After this long digression, Qāshāni returns to narrating the events of 1310: summarising Oljeitu's pilgrimage to the tomb of 'Ali and his adoption of Shi'i signifiers of rule.

There is much about this narrative that suggests literary elaboration, but, due to the tidy way it summarises Oljeitu's religious evolution, it became the normative version of Oljeitu's spiritual development.⁶³ By mapping the chronology of Rashid al-Din's concerns for spiritual matters onto this mostly mundane chronicle, however, we can better understand the emerging ideology of Oljeitu's reign and the role of his embrace of Shi'ism within that ideology. The dominant trend in this evolution was a move towards increased universalism: so Oljeitu came to assume a role as a world sovereign with divine and absolute sanction. Oljeitu's spiritual peregrination can thus be seen as part

of an effort to reformulate worldly sovereignty, in the absence of the Caliphate and apart from Ghazan's particular claim to be a converter king.

The *Ketāb al-Soltāniya*, composed in the spring of 1307 – that is, just after the campaign to Gilan – engages questions of royal legitimacy, as it relates to divinely revealed truth. It also, more than any of Rashid al-Din's other works, demonstrates that the shift from concerns of state to those of faith was not a sharp break, but rather an evolution in Rashid al-Din's portrayal of his patrons. As part of his discussion of prophecy, Rashid al-Din tells of the birth of Oljeitu, at which he himself was present, on the edge of the desert between Marv and Sarakhs.⁶⁴ At the time, the region was gripped by drought, but the prince's birth brought rain. Oljeitu's introduction into the rhetoric of sacral kingship occurs, therefore, through the long-established – and thoroughly 'un-Islamic' – tradition of the rain-maker king.

The majority of the *Soltāniya*, however, consists of an exposition of the relationships between the various prophets, caliphs and saints of Islamic history. After first listing these figures in long tables, Rashid al-Din introduces a genealogical tree that demonstrates the relationship between the prophets of Judeo-Islamic tradition and the Umayyad, Abbasid and Fatimid caliphs.⁶⁵ Two aspects of this tree suggest a debt to Shi'i ideas of political and sacral authority. First, of the three caliphal dynasties, the Fatimid descendants of 'Ali hold the central, privileged position on the page, the position held in earlier portions of the tree by the major prophets of Islamic tradition. Second, this tree is divided into six sections, each one headed by one of the major prophets of the tradition: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. This corresponds to the division of earthly time into seven eras by Ismaili writers, for whom the seventh era would be heralded by the Qā'im.

The genealogical tree of the *Soltāniya*, produced by 1308, when it was included in the Persian copy of the *Majmu'ah-ye Rashidiya*, seems to point towards a sectarian Shi'i articulation of Oljeitu's role as sovereign. However, as already noted, within two years the *Majmu'ah* was translated into Arabic and supplemented by the description of the contents of the broader *Jāme 'al-Tasānif al-Rashidi*. By this time, Rashid al-Din's historical compendium had also gained a universal genealogical tree, which can usefully be contrasted with the sacred genealogy of the *Soltāniya*. The historical tree, which now survives as the *Shu'ab-e Panjgāneh*, includes all the dynasties, caliphal and otherwise, treated in the first two volumes of the historical compendium.⁶⁶ Instead of presenting human history in a single continuous tree divided into ages, here the various peoples of the world are presented in sequence: first the Arabs, then Israelite kings and prophets, followed by the Mongols, Franks and finally Chinese. It thus demonstrates the same universalizing movement seen in the commission of the world history of the *Jāme al-Tavārikh* and in Rashid al-Din's efforts to create a new inclusive space for Islamic theology.

In subsequent collections of Rashid al-Din's theological and scientific writing, Oljeitu's mandate for universal authority expands to encompass even questions of Islamic doctrine. In the *Latā'ef al-Heqā'eq*, completed by May 1309, Oljeitu still plays a primarily interrogative role, prompting questions and debates among the scholars of his mobile college. The last collection of theological questions to survive in a form intended by Rashid al-Din is the *Bayān al-Heqā'eq*. This collection contains reports of further question-and-answer sessions at Oljeitu's court. However, here the sultan himself assumes a role in answering the questions posed by trained scholars. Perhaps the clearest example of this comes in a treatise dated to 21 September 1310, concerning the *hadith* of the Prophet, 'I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali its gate.'⁶⁷ Rashid al-Din describes a court audience, at which an individual named 'Alā' al-Din, from Khorasan, poses a question about this *hadith*: if 'Ali is the gate of the knowledge represented by Muhammad, then who might be its walls and floors and ceilings? Oljeitu takes an interest in this question to both 'Allāma al-Helli and Nizām al-Din 'Abd al-Malek. Each of these scholars – Shi'i and Shāfi'i alike – provides an unsatisfying answer, after which Oljeitu comments that what sets the gate apart from these other parts of the city is its instrumental function: namely, that certain knowledge is achieved by the one who 'opens' the access to Muhammad through an affinity with 'Ali. Inspired by this answer, Rashid al-Din writes it down.

This vision of Oljeitu as the authoritative master of esoteric knowledge despite – or perhaps because of – his illiteracy reflects Abhari's dream of the saint of light and anticipates Akbar's *din-e ilāhi*. In explaining Oljeitu's authority, Rashid al-Din draws an analogy to a jewel from a mine, a stone among other stones that gains value by undergoing the difficult process of refining.⁶⁸ He relates that Oljeitu regularly spoke wise words that amazed the ulama, so that they asked how an illiterate man could speak with such authority.⁶⁹ To this, he replies that it is more amazing that those of learning have nothing to say. He draws a direct analogy to the illiterate Prophet Muhammad, citing another verse of scripture: '[God] has taught you that which you did not know. And ever has the favor of God upon you been great' (Q. 4: 113). Rashid al-Din returns to the metaphor of the jewel when he explains that he recorded Oljeitu's words and deeds so that the ulama might draw on them for analogies, like a source of rubies and a mine of gems.⁷⁰ As with Ghazan in the *Blessed History*, Oljeitu is depicted as an instrumental figure in the fulfilment of God's plan for Islam. God works through Ghazan, to bring his heart and those of his subjects to the faith; Oljeitu plays a much more active, if mystical, role in the on-going realisation of divine truth.

In ascribing prophetic illiteracy to Oljeitu, Rashid al-Din was returning to the subject that occupied his earliest efforts at theology. In the *Towzihāt*, he describes presenting a series of his own reflections concerning the illiteracy of the Prophet Muhammad to Tāj al-Din al-Mu'mini (d. 1307).⁷¹ Al-Mu'mimi

encouraged Rashid al-Din to continue his efforts. Other religious scholars eventually embraced his ideas, composing the endorsements (*taqrizāt*) of orthodoxy preserved in manuscript copies of the *Towzihāt*.⁷² Emboldened by this initial success, Rashid al-Din explains, he continued his theological speculations, claiming inspiration and protection from Muhammad. This description of Rashid al-Din's early efforts at theology occurs in the midst of a lengthy self-defence against accusations brought against him by an unnamed opponent.⁷³ At the beginning of his defence, Rashid al-Din introduces the slanders in generic terms, but, by the end, we learn that the unnamed accuser had questioned the sincerity of Rashid al-Din's conversion to Islam after Rashid al-Din refused to grant him financial support from the estate of the late Ghazan Khan. Thus framed, the account serves to prove Rashid al-Din's orthodoxy and to portray his detractors as grasping opportunists.

Rashid al-Din revisits his earliest theological efforts in the *Latā'ef*. Here, he no longer mentions the accusations brought against him, or his efforts to gain support from other scholars, such as al-Mu'mini. Instead, he relates a dream he had on 26 Ramadan 705 (11 April 1306) in which the caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Omar and 'Osmān encourage him to take up theology. After this dream, he claims, he embarked on a feverish bout of writing, producing three works – the *Towzihāt*, *Miftāh* and *Soltāniya* – in the space of eleven months.⁷⁴ This new account of the beginnings of his theological work contrasts sharply with his description of the relatively conservative and hesitant process of gaining clerical support for the *Towzihāt*. Here, a direct visionary dream experience serves as both inspiration for and legitimization of his writing, once more setting Rashid al-Din apart as a theologian, uniquely qualified to interpret the inspired utterances of Oljeitu.⁷⁵

Conclusion

In a lengthy review of Azfar Moin's book on Timurid sacred kingship, Alan Strathern links the phenomenon to an ineluctable resurgence of 'the default religiosity of mankind: "immanentism"', in opposition to the transcendentalist monotheisms of the Axial Age.⁷⁶ To understand the importance of immanentism demands the study of political expressions of religion: not in canonical and prescriptive works, but as expressed in the heterodox and sometimes contradictory practices, associations and claims that constitute performances of kingship in the name of Islam. In other periods of Islamic history, the notion of sacral kingship appears mostly in popular expressions of faith. In the wake of the Caliphate, however, as Islamic theology entered a period of intense introspection, a new type of Islamic ruler emerged: one who was trained in the faith through the experience of popular Islamic practice. In this new religio-political atmosphere, even formal theological writings could be a theatre for the articulation of a kingship invested with divine authority. Just as in China, where the Phags-pa Lama formulated a cosmology, in which Khubilai Khan represented a *cakravartin* world ruler, Rashid al-Din's bold claims for the

mystical power of his patrons challenged extant orthodoxies and established new ideas about the role of the sovereign in the world.

Notes:

1. Abū' al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh Qāshānī, *Tārīkh-i Uljaytu*, ed. Mahīn Hambly (Tehran: Shirkat Intisharat-i 'Ilmi va Farhangī, 1969), pp. 84–6.
2. A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). For a review of Moin's book from the perspective of the broader field of sacral kingship, see Alan Strathern, 'Drawing the Veil of Sovereignty: Early Modern Islamic Empires and Understanding Sacred Kingship', *History and Theory* 53: 1 (February 2014), which contains a discussion of the four currents of thought listed here, at pp. 80–1.
3. Isabel Miller, 'Local History in Ninth/Fifteenth-Century Yazd: The *Tārīkh-i Jadīd-i Yazd*', *Iran* xxvii (1989), p. 78.
4. Edward G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature Under Tartar Dominion (A.D. 1265–1502)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 40. See also Alessandro Bausani, 'Religion Under the Mongols', in J. A. Boyle, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran. Volume 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 541–2.
5. Out of fifty-six contributions to the proceedings volume for the Eighth International Congress for the History of Religions in Rome, in April 1955, dedicated to sacral kingship, only one deals with Islam, and it opens and closes with disclaimers about its poor fit. See Helmer Ringgren, 'Some Religious Aspects of the Caliphate', in *Studies in the History of Religions, IV: The Sacral Kingship/La Regalità Sacra* (Leiden: Brill, 1959).
6. Ringgren, 'Some Religious Aspects of the Caliphate', pp. 738–40.
7. Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Politics* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), pp. 74–7, 155–62.
8. Hossein Ziai, 'The Source and Nature of Authority: A Study of al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationist Political Doctrine', in C. E. Butterworth, ed., *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 304–44.
9. Ovamir Anjum, 'Mystical Authority and Government in Medieval Islam', in J. J. Curry and E. S. Ohlander, eds, *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200–1800* (London: Routledge, 2012).
10. Erik S. Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 249–303.
11. See Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*.
12. Hamid Dabashi, 'Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī: The Philosopher/Vizier and the Intellectual Climate of his Time', in S. H. Nasr and O. Leaman, eds, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 539.
13. Peter Jackson, 'Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting a Minister–Historian in Ilkhanid Iran', *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* xlvii (2009), pp. 109–22; Judith Pfeiffer, 'Reflections on a "Double Rapprochement": Conversion to Islam among the Mongol Elite during the Early Ilkhanate', in L. Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 369–89.
14. Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battūta, A.D. 1325–1354*, Vol. 2, transl. H. A. R. Gibb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Haklyut Society, 1962), pp. 302–4.
15. Monika Gronke, 'La Religion Populaire en Iran Mongol', in D. Aigle, ed., *L'Iran Face à la Domination Mongole* (Tehran: Institut Française de Recherche en Iran, 1997), p. 205.
16. Rashid al-Din, *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, ed. Muhammad Rowshān and Mustafā Musavi (Tehran: Alborz, 1994), pp. 1,208–12, 1331.

17. Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1500* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), pp. 143–71.
18. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, pp. 4–5; Qāshāni, *Tārikh-e Uljaytu*, pp. 49, 7.
19. Rashid al-Din, *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, pp. 1,375–6.
20. Qāshāni, *Tārikh-e Uljaytu*, pp. 31, 44, 74, 83. No visit is recorded for AH 705 (beg. 24 July 1305), when Oljeitu doesn't seem to have visited Tabriz, or for AH 706 (beg. 13 July 1306), during which year the scaffolding being used for the decoration of the dome collapsed. See Qāshāni, *Tārikh-e Uljaytu*, p. 53; and Chahryar Adle, 'Le Pretendu Effondrement de la Cupole du Mausolée de Qāzān Xān a Tabriz en 705/1305 et Son Exploitation Politique', *Studia Iranica* xv (1986), pp. 267–71.
21. For more on this, see Marco Brambillo's chapter in this volume.
22. For a fuller overview of the *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, see Charles Melville, '*Jāme' al-Tawārikh*', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 14: 5 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 462–8.
23. Rashid al-Din, *Tanksuqnāmeḥ, yā Tebb-e Ahl-e Khitā*, ed. Muḥtaba Minovi (Tehran: Dāneshkadeh-ye Adabiyyāt va 'Olum-e Ensānī, 1971); Rashid al-Din, *Asār va Ahyā*, ed. Irāj Afshār and Manuchehr Sotudeh (Tehran: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran Branch; Tehran University, 1989).
24. Zeki Velidi Togan, 'Reşid-üd-Din Tabîb', in M. T. Houtsma, ed., *İslâm Ansiklopedisi. İslâm Âlemi Coğrafya, Etnoğrafya ve Biyografya Lûgatı*, vol. 9: 1 (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 1960), p. 709.
25. Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad 'Aynī, '*Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān: 'aṣr salāṭīn al-Mamālīk*', cited in 'Abbās 'Azzāwī, *Ta'rīkh al-'Irāq Bayna Ihṭilālāyīn*, Vol. 1 (Qom: al-Sharif al-Razī, 1990), p. 455.
26. Qāshāni, *Tārikh-e Uljaytu*, p. 54; Étienne Quatremère, *Histoire des Mongols de la Perse* (Paris: Oriental Press, 1836), p. cxviii.
27. Tehran, Ketābkhāneh-ye Malek ms. 1281, dated 20 November 1308, the basis of Rashid al-Din, *Latā'ef al-Haqā'eq*, ed. Ghulamrezā Tāher, Vol. 1 (Tehran: Chāpkhāneh-ye Dāneshgāh-e Irān, 1972) and Vol. 2 (Tehran: Chāpkhāneh-ye Dāneshgāh-e Irān, 1974).
28. Rashid al-Din, *Majmu'a al-Rashidiya*, ed. Hāshem Rajabzādeh (Tehran: Mirās-e Maktub, 2013). This manuscript was long considered lost. See Dorothea Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhāns and Their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011), p. 85.
29. Rashid al-Din offers an attenuated list of his collected works in his *vaqfnāmeḥ* addendum of 1314. See Rashid al-Din, *Latā'ef*, Vol. 1, pp. 237–41. In an interpolation into his history, written at some point after 1312, Vassāf also offers a different description of the *Jāme' al-Tasānīf*, suggesting that the grand collection was never produced in the form proposed in 1310. See Shihāb al-Din 'Abdollah Vassāf, *Tajziyat al-Amsār va Tajziyat al-A'sār*, ed. Irāj Afshār et al. (Tehran: Talāyah, 2009), pp. 484–5.
30. Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhāns*, p. 98.
31. Ibid., pp. 94–8; Hamed Fayezi, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Interpretation of *Sūrat al-Kawthar*', *The Muslim World* cii: 2 (2012), pp. 284–307.
32. Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhāns*, p. 98. The contradiction in question with sura 109 is the 'verse of the sword' (9: 5; incorrectly cited as 9: 6 by Krawulsky), which exhorts Muslims to kill unbelievers, rather than allowing them to practise their own religion, as suggested in sura 109.
33. Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhāns*, p. 113.
34. Felix Klein-Franke, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Treatise "On Free will and Predestination": An Attempt to Overcome Inner-Islamic differences', *Le Muséon* cxvii: 3–4 (2004), pp. 527–45.

35. Klein-Franke, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Treatise', p. 532 offers a suitably ecumenical definition of this term as 'a *terminus technicus* that means combination, integration, harmonisation and is known from attempts to merge and melt different systems of thoughts into a single one'.
36. Felix Klein-Franke, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Self-Defence Through His Commenting on al-Ghazzālī's "Reply to the opponents of the 'Proof of Islam'". A Philosophical Interpretation of the Koranic Expression *al-Amāna*', *Le Muséon* cxv: 1-2 (2002), p. 213; Fayezi, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Interpretation', pp. 284–5.
37. Josef van Ess, *Der Wesir und Seine Gelehrten: zu Inhalt und Entstehungsgeschichte der Theologischen Schriften des Rašīduddīn Faḡlullāh (gest. 718/1318)* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1981), pp. 9, 15; Klein-Franke, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Self-Defence', pp. 201–2. Jonathan Brack has tracked the influence of Ghāzali and Rāzi on Rashīd al-Dīn's theology. See Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2016, pp. 217–30.
38. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Majmu'a*, pp. 194–207; Klein-Franke, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Self-Defence'.
39. Rashīd al-Dīn: *Latā'ef*, Vol. 1, pp. 36–7.
40. Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abdollah Vassāf, *Ketāb-e Mostatāb-e Vassāf al-Hazrat dar Bandar-e Moghul* (Bombay Lithograph edition, 1853), p. 539.
41. For recent studies on the conversion, see Charles Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām: the Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān', in Charles Melville, ed., *Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P. W. Avery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 159–77; Pfeiffer, 'Reflections on a "Double Rapprochement"'.
42. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, pp. 23–31.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 1,208–12.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 1,331–4.
45. This variant is found in St. Petersburg IOM ms. D66, which was used for Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, ed. Abdulkarim Ali Oğlu Alizada (Baku: Azarbayjan CCR, 1957); Paris, BnF ms. Supplément Persan 209; London BL ms. Or. 2885; St. Petersburg Public Library ms. Dorn 289; and Rampur Reza Library ms. 1819. A fragmentary version is found in Paris BnF ms. Supplément Persan 1113, included in Rashīd al-Dīn, *Geschichte Gāzān-Hān's aus dem Ta'rīh-i-Mubārak-i-Gāzānī*, ed. Karl Jahn (London: Luzac & Co., 1940).
46. Jonathan Brack has also taken up the question of the second conversion version, looking at its implications for our understanding of models of kingship mediated at the Ilkhanid court. See Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', pp. 137–94, 322–44.
47. This poses the most persistent difficulty for dating the P variant. Along with the minutiae of court affairs mentioned above, it suggests that the material of the P variant predates 1297, though several other aspects of its language suggest a later inclusion in the *Blessed History*. Elsewhere, I have suggested that the modified text might be evidence of a rehabilitation of the memory of Amir Nowruz in the context of the events of 1306–7. See Stefan Kamola, 'Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran', Unpublished dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, 2013, p. 93, n. 28.
48. Charles Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān', in C. Melville, ed., *Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P. W. Avery* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, 1990).
49. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, p. 1,333.
50. Jonathan Brack brought this link between the P variant and Vassaf to my attention (personal communication).

51. Stefan Kamola, 'History and Legend in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*: Abraham, Alexander, and Oghuz Khan', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xxv 4 (2015), pp. 565-7.
52. Rashid al-Din: *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, p. 1,282.
53. Shihāb al-Dīn Abu'l-Futūh Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination (Hikmat al-Ishrāq)*, ed. and transl. John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), pp. 77-8ff.
54. Qāshānī lends a sense of precision to his work by frequently giving the hijra date along with the day of the week, as well as the corresponding date from the Uyghur calendar, with its twelve-year animal cycle and months numbered in Turkic, although the correspondence between the dates is often inexact. See Charles Melville, 'The Chinese Uyghur Animal Calendar in Persian Historiography of the Mongol Period', *Iran* xxii (1994), pp. 83-98.
55. Charles Melville, 'The Ilkhān Öljeitü's Conquest of Gīlān (1307): Rumour and Reality', in R. Amitai-Preiss and D. O. Morgan, eds, *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 73-125.
56. Qāshānī, *Tārikh-e Uljaytu*, pp. 90-100.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-5. Rashid al-Dīn makes no mention of this event.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-8. Even though this debate falls under the annalistic header for AH 709, Qutlughshāh's participation dates it before the campaign to Gīlān in early 1307, when Qutlughshāh was killed.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 98. My thanks to David Morgan for alerting me to the existence of the word *naw* ('new') in the sole manuscript of Qāshānī's work, which Hambly omits from her edition: Istanbul, Aya Sofya ms. 3019, 178b.
60. In David Morgan's estimation, 'if Qutlugh-shāh was at all typical, the Mongols were taking some little time to acquire a knowledge or understanding of Islam that bore much relation to the faith as it is generally understood': see David Morgan, *The Mongols* (London: Blackwell, 2007), p. 142.
61. Qutlughshāh plays a similar narrative role in the *Safvat al-Safā*, the hagiography of Shaykh Safī al-Dīn Safavi. See Ibn Bazzāz Ardabili, *Safvat al-Safā*, ed. Ghulāmrizā Tabātabā'i (Tehran: Zaryāb, 1997), pp. 149-51. There, Qutlughshāh is the advocate of the Kobrāvi shaykh 'Alā' al-Dīn Nāmi, whom Safī al-Dīn, supported by Ghazan Khan, defeats in a court debate. In the scheme of Safavid historiography, this episode serves to highlight the rightness of Safī al-Dīn's practice compared to mainline Kobrāvi Sufism and its revanchist hero, Amir Qutlughshāh.
62. Qāshānī, *Tārikh-e Uljaytu*, pp. 98-9.
63. See, for example, Manuchehr Mortezaei, *Tahāqiq dar Bāre-ye Daura-ye Ilkhānān-e Irān* (Tabriz: Ketābforushī-ye Tehrān 1963), pp. 32-4, 48-55.
64. Rashid al-Din, *Majmu'a*, p. 341.
65. Two copies of this tree from the early fourteenth century have survived. See Rashid al-Din, *Majmu'a*, pp. 351-428, and St. Petersburg IOM ms. C375, folios 147a-156a; see also İlker Evrim Binbaş, 'Structure and Function of the Genealogical Tree in Islamic Historiography', in İ. E. Binbaş and N. Kılıç-Schubel, eds, *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for İsenbike Togan* (Istanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2011).
66. Istanbul Topkapı Saray Müzesi Kütüphanesi ms. Ahmet III 2937, discussed in Binbaş, 'Structure and Function', pp. 489-94.
67. Rashid al-Din, *Bayān al-Heqā'eq*, ed. Hāshem Rajabzādeh (Tehran: Mirās Maktub 2008), pp. 393-9.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-2.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.

71. Quatremère, *Histoire*, pp. cxxi–cxxiii. These earliest speculations on the limits of human reason are perhaps to be identified with the second, third and fourth treatises of the *Tauzihāt*, which treat the Prophet Muhammad’s illiteracy.
72. Van Ess, *Der Wesir*, pp. 22–38, discusses various versions of the lists of these *taqrīzāt* and identifies many of the individuals who wrote them. Many of them are dated to the hijra year 706, which ended on 2 July 1307, and thus further date these early works to before the official commission of a Qur’an commentary.
73. Quatremère, *Histoire*, pp. cxx–cxxx.
74. Rashid al-Din, *Latā’ef*, vol. 1, pp. 44–5.
75. Brack, ‘Mediating Sacred Kingship’, pp. 218–20 discusses an unpublished treatise from one of Rashid al-Din’s works that further demonstrates this special relationship between Rashid al-Din and Oljeitu.
76. Strathern, ‘Drawing the Veil of Sovereignty’, p. 89.

A Glimpse into the Unique Manuscript, the *Safineh* from Tabriz*

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Scholarly activities flourished in the Persianate cultural area in the Ilkhanid period, accompanied by advances in the arts of book production and the illustrated manuscript. One lucid example is a unique miscellaneous manuscript, the *Safineh*, consisting in its present form of 209 titles. The manuscript contains 367 folios (734 pages in the facsimile edition), and is preserved under number 14590 in the library of the Majles-e Showrā-ye Eslāmi in Tehran. Most of the texts were copied between 1321 and 1323. Three treatises were copied at a later date (1323, 1324 and 1335).¹ The miscellany contains a wide range of themes including ethics, mysticism, jurisprudence, scholastic theology (*kalām*), exegetics, history, lexicography, grammar, literary criticism, philosophy, literary texts in prose and verse, ‘religions and sects’ (*milal va’l-nihal*), astronomy and astrology, geomancy, mineralogy, mathematics, medicine, epistles and testaments, administrative texts, complete collections of poetry (*divāns*), music, cosmography and geography, and lectures by the copyist’s teachers.²

While this is only one of the many surviving examples of cultural production in this period, the manuscript is noteworthy for both its scope and the picture it offers of how a cultured individual would collect texts for his own use. Moreover, part of the material collected in this manuscript is the copyist’s personal notes, which contain invaluable information about his time, his teachers and the city of Tabriz – the cultural centre of the Ilkhanids. It is very rare to have such a manuscript copied by a single person.

What makes the *Safineh* miscellany unique is that it was probably compiled for personal use, showing the taste of the compiler and his own personal canon of learning. The compiler’s full name is Abu ‘l-Majd Mohammad ibn Sadr al-Dīn Abi ‘l-Fath Mas‘ūd ibn Mozaffar ibn Abu ‘l-Ma‘ālī Mohammad ibn ‘Abd al-Majid Tabrizi Malekāni Qorashi. Although biographical information is scanty, the miscellany offers us valuable data about his family and their scholarly activities.³ Several members of his family were men of letters. His father, Malek Mas‘ūd ibn Mozaffar (d. 1343), was a clerk in the Ilkhanid administration, and also composed poetry. Abu ‘l-Majd cites several specimens

of his poetry in the *Safineh* (pp. 593–612). His uncle Malek Mahmud ibn Mozaffar (d. 1296) was also a poet. Abu 'l-Majd compiled his collected poems in 1316, and these poems are included in the *Safineh* (pp. 489–500).⁴ Another poet of this family is Majd al-Din Mohammad, Abu 'l-Majd's cousin, whose poetry is also recorded in the *Safineh* (pp. 500–4).

From the evidence in this miscellany, we can conclude that Abu 'l-Majd was certainly a very learned man. He was not a professional copyist, but he collected a huge amount of material for himself. It appears that he used this miscellany as a portable encyclopaedia for his own learning, and perhaps in his lectures.⁵ Abu 'l-Majd himself wrote several works that are collected in the *Safineh*.⁶ It is very rare to have a manuscript of poems copied by their author; generally speaking, there is a long gap between the time when a classical poem or an early book is composed and the date of the oldest surviving copies.

Abu 'l-Majd refers to five of his teachers in the *Safineh*. One of these is Bahā' al-Din Heydar Kāshi, the author of *Ad'iyat al-nabi*. Abu 'l-Majd used to read this book to him in 1323. Jalāl al-Din 'Abd al-Hamid 'Atiqi was another teacher, and several of his lectures are included in the *Safineh*. Abu 'l-Majd's spiritual master was the famous Sa'd al-Din Mahmud ibn 'Abd al-Karim Shabestari (d. 1320), author of *Golshan-e rāz* ('The Rose-Garden of Mystery').⁷ Another of Abu 'l-Majd's teachers was Sharaf al-Din, who advised Abu 'l-Majd to write a 'tenzon' (*monāzareh*), with the title of *Monāzareh-ye chashm-o gush dar mahzar-e del* ('Dispute between the Eye and the Ear in the Presence of the Heart'). The most influential of Abu 'l-Majd's teachers was perhaps Amin al-Din Hājj Bolah (d.c. 1320), one of the learned men of Tabriz. His works on various disciplines, in both Arabic and Persian, are included in the *Safineh*.⁸

Before the discovery of the *Safineh*, we had little information about Hājj Bolah's life and work – but the *Safineh* offers us rich information about this scholar. N. Pourjavady and 'Abd al-Hoseyn Hā'eri both treat Hājj Bolah's life, which I summarise here. In one source, it is mentioned that Hājj Bolah was present during the historically significant confiscation of the possessions of Mo'in al-Din Parvāneh, who was executed in 1277 on the orders of Abāqā Khan (r. 1265–82). We also know that he met the mystic poet Fakhr al-Din 'Erāqi.

When Shams al-Din Joveyni set out on a journey to Rum, he was accompanied by Shams al-Din 'Abidi, Homām al-Din Tabrizi and Amin al-Din Hājj Bolah. In Towqāt, where the mystic Fakhr al-Din 'Erāqi's Sufi convent was situated, Amin al-Din visited him several times, convincing him to come and meet Joveyni. Another mention of Hājj Bolah's name appears in Karbalā'i Tabrizi's *Rowzat al-jenān*, where it is reported that, when Shaykh Hasan Bolghāri arrived at Tabriz, he was welcomed by the great sheikhs of the city, such as Homām al-Din Tabrizi and Hājj Bolah. Another report comes from Ibn Bazzāz Ardabili, who relates how Hājj Bolah granted his students' religious

requests.⁹ On the authority of Samad Movahhed, Mir-Afzali refers to Shabestari's *Sa'adat-nāmeḥ*, in which Shabestari shows his respect for a certain Amin al-Din as his teacher. If this is the same person as Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah, it suggests his high rank, and how reverently he was treated by mystics such as Shabestari. In his mystic poem, Shabestari seeks answers to a number of mystical subjects. He consults his teacher Amin al-Din:

دادی الحق جوابهای چنین	شیخ و استاد من امین الدین
کافرین بر روان پاکش باد	من ندیدم دگر چنان استاد

My Shaykh and my teacher Amin al-Din

Truly gave such answers

I have never seen such a teacher:

May blessings be on his pure soul.¹⁰

Mystical Works on Love

The *Safineh* present a wide range of genres and literary forms, in both Persian and Arabic. There is a conspicuous emphasis on the concept of love in Abu 'l-Majd's selection of literary and mystical works. He includes a selection of romantic epics, such as *Leyli and Majnun*, *Khosrow and Shirin*, *Haft Peykar*, and *Vis and Rāmin*, and other epic works that centre on the love between parent and child, such as Ferdowsi's *Rostam and Sohrāb*. But the overwhelming emphasis is on mystical love. It is true that classical Persian literature is one of the world's richest literary traditions in treating mystical love, and includes towering figures such as Rumi. Even so, the literature is broad enough to give the compiler a great deal of choice, and the compiler of the *Safineh* has chosen to emphasise mystical love in his selection of literary works.

There are several works, or passages in larger works, that define a theory of love. It is not my intention to reduce this rare and magnificent anthology to a compilation on love; yet it is conspicuous how often this and associated notions are treated in the works selected by Abu 'l-Majd. A number of works connected to mystical themes appear next to each other. For instance, Abu 'l-Majd's teacher's work, Hājī Bolah's *al-Latā'ef* (pp. 519–38) is placed between *'Eshq-nāmeḥ* (pp. 509–18) and an abridged version of *Hadiqat al-haqiqeh* (pp. 539–53), by Sanā'i of Ghazna (d. 1131).

In this essay, I will concentrate on the lectures of Abu 'l-Majd's teacher Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah, which are collected in *Latā'ef al-la'ālī* (pp. 519–38). *Latā'ef* is a remarkable text, containing lectures on various topics. It contains a large number of folk quatrains and other poetic forms known as *fahlaviyyāt*.¹¹ Hājī Bolah tells several interesting anecdotes in his lectures about famous figures such as Abu Nuvās (d. 815), Ibn Sinā (980–1037), Mansur al-Hallāj (executed 922) and a score of other famous historical figures. Hājī Bolah refers to them using short accounts. For instance, he reports on the meeting of the great mystic Kharāqāni (c. 963–1033) and Asir al-Din Akhsekati (d.c. 1175) at

a *samā'* session (a mystical observance with music, dance and poetry).¹² Another event is the meeting between Fakhr al-Din Rāzi and a religious jurist (*faqih*) named Zāhid-e Tabrizi, in which they discuss the theme of eternal and accidental beings. The jurist answers Rāzi in Fahlavi dialect. Several of these events are not reported in any other source, and they certainly need to be analysed.

Hājī Bolah's *Latā'ef* treats a wide range of mystical subjects, including love, the lover and the beloved. In his lectures, as they appear in the *Latā'ef*, Hājī Bolah quotes some two hundred pieces of poetry, ranging from quatrains, *mathnavis* and *ghazals* to single couplets. Hājī Bolah's strong interest in Islamic mysticism emerges in his lectures. He gives definitions of love, relates stories to comment on the impact and working of love, and cites sayings and quatrains by famous mystics such as Farid al-Din 'Attār (d.c. 1220), Ahmad Ghazzālī (d. 1126) and Sanā'i (d. 1131) in order to define love. For example, he cites quatrain given below, by Ghazzālī, to comment on his discussion about *ma'refat* ('gnosis'). Hājī Bolah states that '*erfān* ('mystic knowledge') is knowing what the true meaning of the word love is. Such knowledge of a word has a beginning stage and an utmost limit: 'Its beginning requires speech ... while its end requires the fatigue of the tongue because the person's attention is so immersed in the Truth that his tongue cannot utter anything.' At this point, he cites a quatrain, which occurs in Ghazzālī's *Savānih*:

همسایه بشب ز ناله من نغود	ز اول که مرا بعشق کارم نبود
آتش چو هوا گرفت کم گردد دود	کم گشت کنون ناله و دردم افزود

In the beginning, when I was a novice in the matters of love,
 My neighbour did not sleep at night because of my wailing;
 Now since pain has intensified, my bemoaning has decreased;
 Smoke dwindles as soon as fire flows.¹³

What is also interesting in reading Hājī Bolah's lectures is that he sometimes offers commentaries on individual poetic lines, stories and meetings between historical figures. As an example of commentary on a poem, I have chosen Hājī Bolah's short commentary on the opening couplet of Farid al-Din Attār's *ghazal*: 'As one spark from the *'eyn* of the beloved's love appeared last night / the *tā* of nature (*tabi'at*) burned, and reason was embarrassed.'¹⁴ The *Safineh* does not have any of 'Attār's epics, but several references of Hājī Bolah to 'Attār attest that he was popular in the western parts of Persia. It is also possible that Abu 'l-Majd had originally included 'Attār's writings but that these pages are lost. Iraj Afshar has thoroughly examined the manuscript and has concluded that at least 119 folios of the *Safineh* are missing.¹⁵ This would include a huge number of works. Hājī Bolah gives commentary on the couplet in the following way.

از عین عشق دوش پدیدار شد یک شرر
طای طبیعت بسوخت عقل نگونسار شد
یک شرر از عین عشق یعنی از ابتدای عشق و عین عشق را بابتدای ازان جهت تفسیر می کنیم
که عین ابتدای حرف عشق است طای طبیعت یعنی چو عشق درآمد طبیعت نماند و هر گاهی که
طا را از طبیعت بر گیرند آنجا بیعت بماند. یعنی انقیاد حاصل شد. عقل نگونسار شد یعنی عقل
متمم شرع است و این زمان چو عشق درآمد تدبیر نماند.

As one spark from the 'eyn of the beloved's love appeared last night
the *tā* of nature (*tabi'at*) burned, and reason was embarrassed

One spark appeared from the 'eyn of love, i.e., the beginning of love. We interpret the 'eyn as the beginning of love because 'eyn is the first letter of the word love. The *ta* of *tabi'at* or 'nature' refers to the eradication of nature. And when the *tā* is removed from this word, only *bi'at* remains, meaning that 'swearing allegiance' or 'fealty' is attained. The phrase 'reason was embarrassed' means that reason is complementary to holy law and at the time that love appears, no deliberation remains.

In classical Persian literature, the word *tabi'at* refers to the material world created from the four basic Elements: Fire, Water, Air and Earth. To attain to spiritual love and union with the immaterial Beloved, the mystic lover should divest himself of all material interests and attachments. A clear example of divesting oneself of the world of matter and attaining union with the Beloved is the prophet Mohammad's ascension.¹⁶ The prophet goes through heaven, passing each sphere until he arrives at the Throne. During this nocturnal journey, he leaves behind something of his material humanity at each sphere, so that he can encounter God. Mystics believe that reason cannot fathom God because intellect is finite, while God is infinite. For most of his journey, the prophet was accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel. But in the last phase of the journey, at the boundary of the material world, the prophet asked Gabriel why he would not accompany him for the rest of the journey. Gabriel answered that, if he went one step further, his wings would burn. In Islamic mysticism, Gabriel's wings usually symbolise reason.¹⁷

Collections of Quatrains

Alongside such commentaries, Hājī Bolah's *Latā'ef* contains 194 quatrains. These are quatrains by several famous and lesser-known authors whose names are mentioned for the first time here in this anthology. There are three quatrains attributed to 'Omar Khayyām (1048–1131), but there are also quatrains by lesser-known poets such as Sarrāj Qomri and Shaykh Najm al-Din Zarkub.¹⁸ What is fascinating about these quatrains in Hājī Bolah's lectures is that several of them also occur in another collection – namely, the *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār* (pp. 593–612), a collection of 500 quatrains compiled by Abu'l-Majd. The huge

number of quatrains in this manuscript is significant, as it shows the popularity of the genre in western Persia. The topics in *Kholāsat al-ash'ār* revolve around love, the lover and the beloved. Many chapters describe the beloved's physical appearance, his house, or his cruelty, while other chapters focus on the lover's anguish, his complaints about separation, and the beloved's oppression and unfaithfulness, and so on. Similar collections of quatrains are Jamāl Khalil Shirvāni's *Nozhat al-majālis*, containing about 5,000 poems by more than two hundred poets in the thirteenth century, and Farid al-Din 'Attār's *Mokhtār-nāme*.¹⁹ Abu 'l-Majd has divided these quatrains into fifty chapters and provided a table of contents at the beginning of the collection.

Female Poets in the Latā'ef al-la'ālī

One feature that makes the *Safineh* especially significant is the inclusion of poetry by female poets in various works. Sunil Sharma has investigated the poetry and the identity of female poets in *Kholāsat al-ash'ār*, but there are several other works in this peerless miscellany that await research to identify their female authors. One female poet who is prominent in the *Safineh* is the twelfth-century Mahsati of Ganjeh. As Sharma has shown, there are twenty-one quatrains by Mahsati in the *Kholāsat al-ash'ār*. Fifteen of these are known, and have been published in various editions, but six are new discoveries. Two other female poets are mentioned in the *Kholāsat al-ash'ār*: 'Ā'esheh Samarqandiyye and 'Ā'esheh Moqriyyeh, to whom five quatrains are ascribed. Sharma has identified three other female poets in the *Kholāsat al-ash'ār*: 'Dokhtar-e Khatib-e Ganjeh (one quatrain), Dokhtar-e Hosām Sālār (four quatrains), and Jalāl Khātun Samarqandi (two quatrains).²⁰ Several of these poems are also attributed to male poets in other collections of quatrains, such as Shirvāni's *Nozhat al-majāles*.²¹ But the fact that, both in the *Kholāsat al-ash'ār* and in the *Latā'ef*, several poems are attributed to female poets, shows how popular these poets were in western Persia in the fourteenth century.

Kholāsat al-ash'ār is not the only work incorporating poetry by women. Hājj Bolah cites seven quatrains by Mahsati and 'Ā'esheh Samarqandi in his lectures. The spontaneity of Hājj Bolah's lectures and his insertion of poetic passages show how popular these poets were at that time. The following quatrain by 'Ā'esheh Samarqandiyye is cited between two poems by Sanā'i and Jamāl al-Din Ashhari, which may indicate that the gender of the poet mattered less than the quality and subject-matter of the poem:

گفتی که ترا شوم مدار اندیشه	دل خوش کن و بر صبر گمار اندیشه
کو صبر و چه دل کاندج دلش میخوانی	یک قطره خونست و هزار اندیشه

You said: 'I will be yours, do not worry,

Put your heart at ease, curb your worries with patience.

Where is this patience? What is this thing you call the heart:

It is one drop of blood and a thousand worries.²²

Hājī Bolah also cites the following two quatrains by Mahsati, which are included again in the *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*:

ترکم سوی آماج گه آمد سرمست	وز چهره خود تیروکمان اندر دست
هر تیر که چون منش ز خود دور انداخت	نالان نالان برفت و بر خاک نشست

When my Turk came drunken to the target,
the bow and arrow in his hands came from his own face;
Each arrow that he threw, like me, far from himself,
went groaning and groaning, till it fell in the dust.²³

چون روزکمان بربرودش تورسید	تیرش بلب چشمه نوش تورسید
گوئی ز هوش از حدیث من تافته بود	زیرا که بصد جهد بگوش تورسید

On the day when the bow came on your chest and shoulder,
the arrow came at the lip of your eternal source
You'd say the bow-string twisted from my tale,
for it came to your ear by a hundred toils.²⁴

Hājī Bolah cites four other quatrains by Mahsati, of which I will give only the first lines:

باماه رخی که زلف او چون شست است	With a moon-faced one, whose curls are like a snare,...
چشم نوکه صبدنوفسونش بگرفت	Your eyes which seize a hundred bonds and charms ...
ای دوست دلم بجان رسانیده ای تست	O friend! My heart has reached the soul because of you ...
چندان بدورخ گل بدیع آوردی	How many fresh rosebuds you brought in, with your two cheeks ...

What is also noteworthy is that, with the exception of one quatrain ('How many fresh ...'), none of them occurs in the other collections of quatrains, such as Frits Meier's excellent study *Die schöne Mahsatī*.

It is fascinating to see that Hājī Bolah cites so much poetry by female poets, especially Mahsati. The fact that several of these poems occur in both *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār* and *Latā'ef* indicates the taste of Abu 'l-Majd and his teacher, but also suggests how the choice of quatrains was made. These poems were apparently very popular in this period. It is not far-fetched to think that Abu'l-Majd added quatrains that he had heard cited by his teachers, because all of the above poems selected in the *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār* also appear in *Latā'ef*.

Conclusions

This short survey of the works in Abu 'l-Majd's unique miscellany reveals several aspects of cultural activities during the Ilkhanid period. To begin with, Abu 'l-Majd's miscellany is only one example of how cultured people would

travel and collect the texts they desired, according to the range of their interests. Abu 'l-Majd does not tell us why he collected this huge store of material, but it seems likely that it was his personal portable library, perhaps also intended for his students' use. Abu 'l-Majd's interdisciplinary approach to learning is interesting. He includes all types of texts, from theology and literary studies to occult sciences, as if to suggest that a cultured person should have knowledge of all these fields. Abu 'l-Majd's miscellany is only one mirror reflecting the enormous cultural activity of the Ilkhanid period. While many other Ilkhanid manuscripts show the importance of patronage in the production of manuscripts (and especially illuminated manuscripts), Abu 'l-Majd's sober miscellany opens a window to a personal approach to learning in fourteenth-century Persia. Furthermore, the *Safineh* is certainly an invaluable addition to our knowledge of the cultural development and literary taste of the period in the western parts of the Persian-speaking world. It also shows how important poetry and mysticism were to the Persian people, in their education, cultural activities and spiritual aspirations. The large number of works in verse is clear evidence of the essential place of poetry in all these spheres. As Abu 'l-Majd's teacher Shabestari states in the introduction of his *Sa'ādat-nāmeḥ*:

علما نیز شعرگوی شدند

مردم عصر شعر جوی بندند

As the people of our age were looking for poetry,
the religious scholars grew into composers of poetry.²⁹

Appendix: Texts Included in the Safineh

	Title	Author	Page	Language
1	<i>Entekhāb al-masābeh</i>	Hoseyn ibn Mas'ud Baghavi	2–30	Arabic
2	<i>Ad'iyyat al-nabi</i>	Bahā' al-Din Heydar Kāshi	31–6	Arabic
3	<i>al-Arba'in fi ahādith al-nabavīyya</i>	Zā'ed ibn Sa'id Tusi	36–7	Arabic
4	<i>Entekhāb Ehyā' 'olum al-Din</i>	Amin al-Din Hājj Bolah	37–54	Arabic
5	<i>no title: the text contains reports of several mystics</i>		55–6	Arabic
6	<i>al-Qasā'ed al-vatariyya</i>	Mohammad ibn Rashid Baghdādī	57	Arabic
7	<i>al-Hedāya fi osul al-feqh</i>	Amin al-Din Hājj Bulah	58–9	Arabic
8	<i>al-Tazkera fi 'l-osulayn va-l-feqh</i>	Amin al-Din Hājj Bulah	60–70	Arabic
9	<i>Ketāb dar feqh-i Shāfe'i (Kafāya fi 'l-foru')</i>	Hoseyn ibn Mas'ud Farā' Baghavi	70–82	Persian
10	<i>Manāsek-e Hajj</i>	Bihā' al-Din Ya'ghub	82–90	Persian
11	<i>Ketāb fi 'elm al-farā'ez</i>	Salāh al-Din Musā	90–2	Persian
12	<i>Ketāb al-Owrād</i>	Amin al-Din Hājj Bolah	92–6	Persian/ Arabic
13	<i>Ketāb-e verd-e sobh</i>	Amin al-Din Hājj Bolah	96–8	Persian / Arabic
14	<i>Da'avāt ayyām al-sab'a</i>	reported by Ali ibn Abi Tālib	98	Arabic
15	<i>Ad'iyyaei ayyām-e Ramazān al-mobārak</i>	reported by Ali ibn Abi Tālib	99	Persian
16	<i>Kalemāt Amir al-mu'menin 'Ali</i>	compiled by Abu 'Othmān Jāhez al-Basri	99–100	Arabic
17	<i>Tavārikh al-rasul</i>	Amin al-Din Hājj Bolah	100–2	Arabic
18	<i>Tavārikh al-kholafā'</i>		102–3	Arabic
19	<i>Entekhāb al-sāmi fi asāmi</i>		104–17	Persian
20	<i>Entekhāb al-masāder</i>	Qāzi Abu 'Abd Allāh Hoseyn Zowzani	117–27	Persian
21	<i>Tohfā (Arabic-Persian lexicon)</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	128–31	Persian
22	<i>Menhāj zi 'l-Hasab fi ektesāb 'olum al-adab</i>	Amin al-Din Hājj Bolah	131–44	Arabic
23	<i>Tasrif al-'Ezzi</i>	'Ezz al-Din Zanjāni	145–6	Arabic
24	<i>al-Namuzaj fi al-nahv</i>	Mahmud b. 'Omar Zamakhshari	146–9	Arabic
25	<i>al-'Avāmel al-me'a fi al-nahv</i>	'Abd al-Qādir Jorjāni	149–50	Arabic
26	<i>Qasideh fi 'l-nahv</i>		151–2	Arabic

27	<i>Qasideh fi 'l-'aruz va-l-qavāfi</i>	Ibn Hājeḥ Maleki	153–5	Arabic
28	<i>al-Kāfi fi 'ilm al-qavāfi</i>	Sāhib Ismā'il ibn 'Abbād Tāliqāni	155	Arabic
29	<i>Qasideh fi al-'aruz wa-l-qavāfi</i>	Sadr al-Din Sāvujī	156–69	Arabic
30	<i>Mokhtasar dar 'aruz va qavāfi-ye Pārsiyan</i>	Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah	169–72	Persian
31	<i>al-Kāfiyyeh fi 'elm al-'aruz va-l-qāfiyyeh</i>	Abu'l-Majd Mohammad ibn Malik Mas'ud ibn Mozaffar	173–81	Persian
32	<i>Nezām al-tavārikh</i>	Qāzi Nāsir al-Din Bayzāvi	182–98	Persian
33	<i>Qasideh al-Dureydi</i>	Abu Bakr Mohammad ibn Durayd	199– 201	Arabic
34	<i>al-Mu'asharāt</i>	Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali Fahri-yi Muqri known as Hasri-yi Qeyravāni	202–5	Arabic
35	<i>Qasideh ['Ayniyyeh]</i>	Abu 'Ali Ibn Sinā	206	Arabic
36	<i>Commentary on Ibn Sinā's qasideh</i>	Shams al-Din Samarqandi	206–7	Arabic
37	<i>Khotbat al-nabi</i>		207	Arabic
38	<i>Etbāq al-zahab</i>	Sharaf al-Din Shafruh Esfahāni	207–9	Arabic
39	<i>Maqāmāt</i>	Mahmud ibn 'Omar Zamakhshari	209–11	Arabic
40	<i>maqāmāt</i>	Qāsim ibn 'Ali Hariri Basri	211–20	Arabic
41	<i>maqāmāt</i>	Qāzi Hamid al-Din 'Omar Balkhi	220–7	Persian
42	<i>al-Shavāhed va-'l-shavāred</i>	Abu 'l-Hasan Mohammad Ahvāzi	227–32	Arabic
43	<i>Ketāb al-mahabba al-Haqiqiyya</i>	Qosheyri	233	Persian
44	<i>Asmā'-e abāhā beh Estelāh-e Sufiyan</i>		233	Persian
45	<i>Monāzareh-ye gol-o mol</i>	Abu Sa'id Tirmizi	234–9	Persian
46	<i>Monāzareh-ye Sarv-o āb</i>	Qāzi Nizām al-Din Esfahāni	239	Persian/ Arabic
47	<i>Monāzareh-ye shārāb-o hashish</i>	Sa'd al-Din ibn Bahā' al-Din	240	Persian
48	<i>Monāzareh-ye shārāb-o hashish</i>		240	Persian
49	<i>Monāzareh-ye shimshir-o qalam</i>		240	Persian

50	<i>Monāzareh-ye zamin-o āsemān</i>		241	Persian
51	<i>Monāzareh-ye nār-o torāb</i>	Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah	241	Persian
52	<i>Monāzareh-ye sam'-o basar</i>	Abu 'l-Majd Mohammad ibn Mas'ud	241–5	Persian
53	<i>Monāzareh-ye nazm-o nasr</i>	Abu 'l-Majd Mohammad ibn Mas'ud	245	Persian
54	<i>Ketāb al-da'avāt fi 'l-owqāt</i>		246	Persian
55	<i>Da'avāt va afsunhā</i>		246	Persian
56	<i>osul al-feqh</i>		247–8	Arabic
57	<i>Al-Zobdat fi 'l-manteq</i>	Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah	248–53	Arabic
58	<i>al-Shamsiyya fi 'l-qavā'id al-mantiqiyya</i>	Najm al-Din Dabirān Kātibi-yi Qazwini	253–60	Arabic
59	<i>Hekmat al-'ayn</i>	Najm al-Din Dabirān Kātibi-yi Qazwini	260–74	Arabic
60	<i>Menhāj al-'ābedin ilā 'l-janna</i>	Abu Hāmid Mohammad Ghazzālī	275	Arabic
61	<i>al-Munqidh min al-zalāl</i>	Abu Hāmid Mohammad Ghazzālī	275–83	Arabic
62	<i>al-Maznun bi 'alā ghayr ahlih</i>	Abu Hāmid Mohammad Ghazzālī	283–288	Arabic
63	<i>al-I'tiqād</i>	Abu Hāmid Mohammad Ghazzālī	288–9	Arabic
64	<i>Mishkāṭ al-anwār</i>	Abu Hāmid Mohammad Ghazzālī	289–97	Arabic
65	<i>Khotbat al-dars</i>	Fakhr al-Din Mohammad ibn 'Umar Rāzi	297–302	Arabic
66	<i>Khotba</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	302	Arabic
67	<i>al-Tanbih 'alā Haqiqat al-ma'ād</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	302–3	Arabic
68	<i>Commentary on the sura A'lā</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	303–4	Arabic
69	<i>Qasideh (dar falsafa va manteq)</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	304–5	Persian
70	<i>Rāh-e khodāy shenākhtan</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	306–10	Persian
71	<i>Tahsil al-haqq fi mazāheb al-khalq</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	310–14	Persian
72	<i>Osul al-din va-l-melal va-l-nehal</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	314–22	Persian
73	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-hobb</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	322–3	Arabic
74	<i>Khotba al-towhid</i>	Abu 'Ali Sinā	323	Arabic
75	<i>Tarjameh-yi khotbat al-towhid</i>	'Omar ibn Ibrāhim Khayyāmi	323–4	Arabic

76	<i>al-Eshārāt va 'l-tanbihāt</i>	Abu 'Ali Sinā	325–43	Arabic
77	<i>Mas'ala fī sirr al-qadar</i>	Abu 'Ali Sinā	343–4	Arabic
78	<i>Konuz al-mo'azemin</i>	Abu 'Ali Sinā	344	Persian
79	<i>Ketāb al-Shaykh Abi Sa'id ibn Abi 'l-Kheyr elā ibn 'Ali ibn Sinā</i>		345	Arabic
80	<i>Ketāb ibn 'Ali ibn Sinā fī javāb al-Shaykh Abi Sa'id</i>		345	Arabic
81	<i>Commentary on the sura al- ekhlās and mu'awwadhatayn</i>	Abu 'Ali Sinā	345–8	Arabic
82	<i>al-Tanbih 'ala ba'z al-asrār al-mowzu'a fī ba'z suvar al- Qur'ān al-Karim</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	348–51	Arabic
83	<i>Tafsīr-e sura-ye ekhlās</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	351	Persian
84	<i>Āghāz-o anjām</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	352–7	Persian
85	<i>Owsāf al-ashraf</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	357–64	Persian
86	<i>al-Zabda fī 'l-hay'a</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	365–81	Persian
87	<i>Ma'rifat al-taqvim</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	381–6	Arabic
88	<i>Madkhal-e manzum</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	386–9	Persian
89	<i>Dānistan-e ān-keh māh dar kodām borj ast beh taqvim</i>	ascribed to Khājah Nasir al- Din Tusi	389	Persian
90	<i>Ahkām-e qamar dar boruj</i>	ascribed to Khājah Nasir al- Din Tusi	389	Persian
91	<i>Ma'refat-e ostorlāb</i>	Nasir al-Din 'Obeydollāh 'Obaydi	390–5	Persian
92	<i>Jadavāl-e ahkām va ekhtiyārāt-e nojumi</i>		395–6	Persian
93	<i>Fāl-e moshaf</i>		397	Persian
94	<i>Ashkāl-e raml</i>		397	Persian
95	<i>Ketāb fī 'elm al-raml</i>		397–9	Persian
96	<i>Tohfeh [dar 'elm-e ramal]</i>	Sa'd al-Din Mas'ud ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abdollāh Khāsebaki	399– 404	Persian
97	<i>Badi' [dar 'elm-e hesāb]</i>	Sa'd al-Din Mas'ud ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abdollāh Khāsebaki	404–8	Persian
98	<i>Jadval-e ma'refat-e ghāleb-o maghlub</i>		408	Persian
99	<i>Ketāb fī 'l-tebb</i>	Amin al-Din Owtāji	409–10	Persian
100	<i>Alfiyyeh</i>	Abu Bakr Mohammad ibn Zakariyyā' Rāzi	411–12	Arabic
101	<i>Mansha'at</i>	Shams al-Din Mohammad Jovayni	412–13	Persian

102	<i>Vasiyyat-nāmeḥ</i>	Shams al-Din Mohammad Jovayni	414	Persian
103	<i>Vasiyyat-nāmeḥ</i>	Bihā' al-Din Jovayni	414–15	Persian
104	<i>Vasiyyāt</i>	Fakhr al-Din Rāzi	415	Arabic
105	<i>Nāmeḥ</i>	Jamāl al-Din Jili	416	Persian
106	<i>Tarassul (ekhvāniyyāt)</i>	Majd al-Din 'Alkā'i	416–18	Persian
107	<i>Latā'ef-e sharaḥī</i>	'Abdollah ibn 'Ali known as Falak-e Tabrizi	418–34	Persian
108	<i>Sharḥ-e majmu'-e Qor'ān al-karim va-zekr al-karim</i>		435	Persian
109	<i>Mojez [fi 'elm a'dād al-vefq]</i>	Abu 'l-Majd Mohammad ibn Malek Mas'ud	435–6	Persian
110	<i>Khavāss-e a'dād-e veḥq</i>		436–7	Persian
111	<i>Jadval-e ekhtelāj</i>		437	Persian
112	<i>Jadval-e tavāriḥ-e anbiyā' va kholafā' va hokamā' va 'olamā' va moluk</i>		438	Persian
113	<i>Jadval-e tavāriḥ-e anbiyā' va sahābeh va 'olamā' va salātin</i>		438	Persian
114	<i>Tāriḥ-e Tabriz</i>		439	Persian
115	<i>Ebtedā'-e dowlāt-e Khārazm-shāhiyān</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	439	Persian
116	<i>Nāmeḥ-ye Hulāku beh omārā'-e Shām va pāsokh-e ān</i>	Khājah Nasir al-Din Tusi	439–40	Arabic
117	<i>Ghazaliyyāt dar towḥid va tāmāt</i>	Jalāl al-Din 'Atiqi-ye Tabrizi	440–1	Persian
118	<i>Divān-e ash'ār</i>	Zahir al-Din Fāriyābi	442–89	Persian
119	<i>Divān-e ash'ār</i>	Majd al-Din Malik Mahmud ibn Mozaffar-e Tabrizi	489–500	Persian
120	<i>Divān-e ash'ār</i>	Majd al-Din Mohammad Tabrizi	500–4	Persian
121	<i>Qesseh-ye Monāzareh-ye āhu</i>	Jalāl al-Din 'Atiqi-ye Tabrizi	504–5	Persian
122	<i>Sohbat-nāmeḥ</i>	Homām al-Din Tabrizi	506–9	Persian
123	<i>'Eshq-nāmeḥ</i>	'Ezz al-Din 'Atā'i	509–18	Persian
124	<i>Latā'ef al-la'ālī</i>	Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah	519–38	Arabic / Persian
125	<i>Nur al-hadiqa li-ahl al-haqiqa (hadiqa al-haqiqa)</i>	Hakim Sanā'i Ghaznavi	539–53	Persian
126	<i>[gozideh-ye] Vis-o Rāmin</i>	Fakhr al-Din Asad Gorgāni	554–9	Persian

127	<i>[gozideh-ye] Khosrow-o Shirin</i>	Nezāmi-ye Ganjavi	560–4	Persian
128	<i>[gozideh-ye] Leyli-o Majnun</i>	Nezāmi-ye Ganjavi	565	Persian
129	<i>[gozideh-ye] Haft peykar</i>	Nezāmi-ye Ganjavi	566–7	Persian
130	<i>[gozideh-ye] Shāh-nāmeḥ</i>	Hakim Abu ‘l-Qāsem Ferdowsi	568–78	Persian
131	<i>Nesāb al-sobyān</i>	Abu Nasr Farāhi	578–81	Persian
132	<i>Robā’iyyāt-e Owḥad al-Din Kermāni</i>	Selected by Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah	581–92	Persian
133	<i>Kholāsāt al-ash’ār fi ‘l-robā’iyyāt</i>	Abu ‘l-Majd Mohammad ibn Mas’ud ibn Mozaffar	593–612	Persian
134	<i>Logḥat-e Fors</i>	Asadi Tusi	613–22	Persian
135	<i>Kalemāt-e Shaykh al-Eslām Ansāri (1)</i>		622–4	Persian
136	<i>Kalemāt-e Shaykh al-Eslām Ansāri (2)</i>		624	Persian
137	<i>Pand-nāmeḥ-ye Anushirvān</i>		624–6	Persian
138	<i>Kalemāt-e Bozormjehr (1)</i>		626	Persian
139	<i>Kalemāt-e Bozormjehr (2)</i>		626	Persian
140	<i>Vasāyā’ tiyāzuq al-hakim li-Anushirvān</i>		626	Arabic
141	<i>Ons al-vājedin</i>	Abu Sa’id ibn Monshi Astarābādi	627–30	Arabic
142	<i>Madiheh-ye bi noqteh</i>		630	Persian
143	<i>Mokhtasar dar ‘elm-e hesāb</i>		631	Persian
144	<i>Ketāb fi ‘l- hesāb</i>		631–2	Persian
145	<i>Resāleh dar musiqi</i>	Mohammad ibn Mohammad Neyshāburi	632–3	Persian
146	<i>Eksir-e kabir</i>	Shaykh ‘Ali Maghrebi	633	Arabic/ Persian
147	<i>Ketāb fi ba’z al-masā’el al-tebbiyyeh</i>		633–4	Persian
148	<i>Khavāss al-ahjār</i>		634–8	Persian
149	<i>‘Aqā’ed-e feraq</i>		639–44	Persian
150	<i>Latā’ef al-towhid fi gharā’eb al-tafrid</i>	Sa’d al-Din Homavi	644–5	Persian
151	<i>al-Mokhtār men al-towrāt</i>		645	Arabic
152	<i>Ketāb owsa [bihi] li- ‘Ali</i>		645–6	Arabic
153	<i>Vasiyya ‘Ali li-ibnih ‘l-Hasan</i>		646–7	Arabic
154	<i>Vasiyya ‘Ali li-valadihi l-Hoseyn</i>		648	Arabic

155	<i>Hokumāt-e 'Ali</i>		648	Persian
156	<i>al-Mabda' va-l-ma'ād</i>	Zeyn al-Din Seyfi	649–50	Persian
157	<i>Resāleh al-motamarraq</i> (<i>'Aql- sorkh</i>)	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	650–2	Persian
158	<i>Bāng-e morghān</i>	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	652–3	Persian
159	<i>So'ālāt-e Eskandar az Arastu</i>		653–4	Persian
160	<i>Dalā'el al-a'dā'</i>		654–5	Persian
161	<i>Dar 'elm-e ferāsāt</i>		656	Persian
162	<i>Khavāss-e ma'ādīn-e kāni</i>		656	Persian
163	<i>Khavāss-e mo'atterāt</i>		656	Persian
164	<i>Khavāss-e ghallāt</i>		657	Persian
165	<i>Dalā'el-e barf-o bārān</i>		657–60	Persian
166	<i>Aqālim-o belād</i>		660–1	Persian
167	<i>Manāber</i>	Jalāl al-Din 'Atiqi-ye Tabrizi	661–76	Persian
168	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-rezā'</i>		676	Arabic
169	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-sabr</i>		676	Arabic
170	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-'obudiyya</i>		676	Arabic
171	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-erādeh</i>		677	Arabic
172	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-esteqāma</i>		677	Arabic
173	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-ekhlās</i>		677	Arabic
174	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-ehyā'</i>		677	Arabic
175	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-zekr</i>		677	Arabic
176	<i>Kitāb fi 'l-fotovva</i>		677	Arabic
177	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-sedq</i>		677	Arabic
178	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-morāqaba</i>		677	Arabic
179	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-mahabba</i>		677	Arabic
180	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-showq</i>		677	Arabic
181	<i>Ketāb fi 'l-samā'</i>		677	Arabic
182	<i>Tariq al-ākhera</i>	Sharaf al-Din 'Othmān b. Hājj Bolah	678–80	Persian
183	<i>Savāneh</i>	Ahmad Ghazzālī	681–6	Persian
184	<i>Resālat fi 'l-teyr</i>	Ahmad Ghazzālī	686–7	Persian
185	<i>Tazkereh (Resāleh-ye</i> <i>'Ayniyya)</i>	Ahmad Ghazzālī	687–91	Persian
186	<i>Mo'nes al-'oshshāq</i>	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	691–4	Persian
187	<i>Resālat al-sufiyyeh</i>	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	695–6	Persian
188	<i>Āvāz-e par-e Jebra'il</i>	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	696–7	Persian
189	<i>Safīr-e Simorgh</i>	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	698–9	Persian
190	<i>Resālat al-maktab (hālat-e</i> <i>tofuliyyat)</i>	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	700–2	Persian
191	<i>Loghat-e murān</i>	Shehāb al-Din Sohravardi	702–3	Persian
192	<i>Resāleh al-qowsiyyeh</i>	Kamāl al-Din Esmā'il Esfāhāni	704–10	Arabic

193	<i>al-Qowsiyyeh al-nezāmiyyeh</i>	Qāzi Nezām al-Din Esfahāni	710–11	Arabic
194	<i>Resālat al-khargāhiyyeh</i>	Kamāl al-Din Esmā'il Esfahāni	711	Arabic
195	<i>Resālat al-kheyli</i>	Qāzi Nezām al-Din Esfahāni	712	Arabic
196	<i>Resāleh-ye 'elm-o 'aql</i>	Amin al-Din Hājī Bolah	713	Persian
197	<i>Sovar al-aqālim (aqālim-o belād)</i>	Soleymān (...)	714–15	Persian
198	<i>Resāleh-ye qalamiyyeh</i>	'Abd al-'Aziz Kāshi	716–19	Persian
199	<i>Monāzareh-ye gol-o mol</i>	Serāj al-Din Qomri-ye Āmoli	719–21	Persian
200	<i>Qasideh</i>	Abu 'l-Fath Bosti	721–2	Arabic
201	<i>Tarjameh-ye [manzum-e] qasideh-ye Bosti</i>	Badr al-Din Jājarmi	721–2	Persian
202	<i>ash'ār al-'Arabi</i>		723–6	Arabic
203	<i>Na't al-nabi Mohammad</i>	Hoseyn Mansur Hallāj	727	Arabic
204	<i>Ekhtiyārāt ayyām al-asābi'</i>	ascribed to 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib	727	Arabic
205	<i>Molakhkhas akhbār Bani Umayya</i>		728	Arabic
206	<i>Badāyi' l-sāhibiyyeh</i>	Abu 'l-Majd Mohammad ibn Malik Mas'ud	728–33	Persian
207	<i>Mokhtasar fi zekr al-aqālim al-sab'a</i>		733	Arabic
208	<i>Mokhtasar marvi al-nabi</i>	Abu 'l-Majd Mohammad ibn Malik Mas'ud reports from Sa'd al-Din Mahmud ibn 'Abd 'l-Karim ibn Yahyā Shabestari	733	Arabic
209	<i>Maktub</i>	Ghiyāth al-Din Mohammad Wazir	733–4	Persian

Notes:

- * The first part of this chapter is mainly based on the author's previous research on the *Safineh*, published as 'A Treasury from Tabriz: A Fourteenth-Century Manuscript Containing 209 Works in Persian and Arabic', in *Persica: Annual of the Dutch-Iranian Society* 19 (2003) pp. 125–64; 'Casing the Treasury: The Safina-yi Tabriz and its Compiler' (pp. 15–42), and 'Literary Works in Tabriz's Treasury' (pp. 113–36) in A. A. Seyed-Gohrab, A. A. and S. McGlinn, eds, *The Treasury of Tabriz: The Great Il-Khanid Compendium* (Leiden: Rozenberg Publishers, 2007).
1. Abu 'l-Majd, *The Safineh, chāp-e 'aksi az ru-ye noskkeh-ye khatti ketābkhāneh majles-e showrā-ye Eslāmi* (Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Dāneshgāhi, 2002). All page references in the main text are to this edition. For an excellent study of the colophons of this miscellany, see I. Afshar, 'Anjāmeh-hā-ye safineh-ye Tabriz', in *Nāmeḥ-ye Bahārestān*, vols 8–9, nos 13–14 (Autumn–Winter 2008/09), pp. 285–330.
 2. See appendix to this chapter for a list of works included in the *Safineh*.
 3. On Abu 'l-Majd's biography, see N. Purjavādi, 'Erfān-e asil-e Irāni dar Safineh-ye Tabriz', in *Eshrāq va 'erfān: maqāleh-hā va naqd-hā* (Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Dāneshgāhi, 2001), pp. 215–17 (originally appeared as introduction to the *Safineh*, pp. 23–7). See also I. Afshar, 'Codicological Characteristics and Geographical Contents of the Safina-yi Tabriz', in *The Treasury of Tabriz: The Great Il-Khanid Compendium* (Leiden: Rozenberg Publishers, 2010), pp. 53–4.
 4. See M. A. Tarbiyat, *Dāneshmandān-e Āzarbāijān* (Tabriz: Ferdowsi, 1936), pp. 359–60; S. Nafisi, *Tārikh-e nazm va nasr dar Irān va dar zabān-e Fārsi*, 2nd edn (Tehran: Miḥan, 1994), vol. I, p. 224, vol. II, p. 749.
 5. In his interview ('Ā'ineh-ye fārhangī-ye Tabriz dar dowreh-ye Il-khāniyān') with N. Pourjavady, Asghar Mahdavi states that Abu 'l-Majd was informed about these disciplines. See *Nashr-e Dānesh* 19: 4 (2003), p. 42.
 6. He wrote the treatise *al-Kāfiyya fi 'ilm al- 'aruz wa- 'l-qāfiyya*, dealing with Persian prosody. Next to these works, he wrote three debating poems: the *Monāzāreh-ye sam 'o basar* ('Debate between the Ear and the Eye,'); *Monāzāreh-ye nazm-o nasr* ('Debate between Poetry and Prose'); and *Monāzāreh-ye nār-o torāb* ('Debate between Fire and Dust').
 7. According to Hā'eri, Abu 'l-Majd's reference to Shabestari dates from 1324, showing that Shabestari did not die in 1320. See p. 6 of Hā'eri's introduction to the *Safineh*.
 8. Hājj Bolah's works include *al-Hedāya fi osul al-feqh* (pp. 58–9); *al-Tazkera fi 'l-osulayn va-l-feqh* (pp. 60–70); *Ketāb al-Owrād* (pp. 92–6); *Ketāb-e vird-e sobh* (pp. 96–8); *Tavārikh al-rasul* (pp. 100–2); *Menhāj zi 'l- Hasab fi ektesāb 'olum al-adab* (pp. 131–44); *Mokhtasar dar 'aruz va qavāfi-ye Pārsiyan* (pp. 169–72); *Monāzāreh-ye nār-o torāb* (p. 241); *Al-Zobdat fi 'l-manteq* (pp. 248–53); *Latā'ef al-la'ālī* (pp. 519–38); *Robā'iyāt-e Owḥad al-Din Kermāni* (pp. 581–92); *Resāleh-ye 'elm-o 'aql* (p. 713).
 9. See Pourjavady, 'Erfān-e asil-e Irāni dar Safineh-ye Tabriz', pp. 215–17; and pp. 7–8 in Hā'eri's introduction to the *Safineh*.
 10. Mahmud Shabestari, *Sa'ādat-nāmeḥ* (n.d., n.p.) p. 18, ll. 15–16.
 11. See also pp. 678–80 for other examples. On *fahlaviyyāt*, see A. Tafazzoli in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. Fahlaviyāt. Hājj Bolah also refers to other quatrains and poetic forms: 'Owromanān refers to a tribe in Hamadān whose poets compose quatrains [*do beyti*] and such a quatrain is called *Owromanān*. Poems that consist of three to six couplets are called *Shirvinān*. These poems belong to an eponymous tribe who composed such a form of poetry. Poems longer than six couplets are

- called *shabestān*, because they were recited during the night.' See p. 524. In another place (p. 528), we read: 'It is said that *Owromanān* formed a tribe in Hamadān who were all lovers and also perished in love.' For a grammar and wordlist of *Owromanān*, see D. N. Mackenzie, *The Dialect of Awroman (Hawrāmān-i Luhon) Grammatical Sketch, Texts, and Vocabulary* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1966).
12. On Asir al-Din Akhsekati and the *Safīneh*, see M. R. Shafī'i-Kadkani, 'Khāqāni va mohit-e adabi-ye Tabriz', *Nāmeḥ-ye Bahārestān* IV: 1–2 (2003/04), pp. 159–64.
 13. *Latā'ef*, p. 522; see the Appendix above.
 14. See Farid al-Din 'Attār, *Divān*, ed. M.T. Tafazzoli (Tehran: 'Elmi va Farhangi, 2005), p. 196, ghazal 253. The second hemistich in this critical edition differs from Hājī Bolah's version. While Hājī Bolah's reading is *tā-ye tabi 'at be-sukht* ('the *tā* of nature burned'), Tafazzoli's reading is *tā-ye tariqat betāft* ('the *tā* of the Path inflamed'). Tafazzoli gives no variant for *tabi 'at*, but he gives *besukht* as another variant reading for *betāft*. The *Safīneh* is apparently unique in using *tabi 'at*.
 15. According to Iraj Afshar, the manuscript contains 367 folios – not 368, as indicated in the introduction to the manuscript. See Iraj Afshar, 'Codicological Characteristics and Geographical Contents of the *Safīna-yi Tabriz*', in A. Seyed-Gohrab and S. McGlinn, eds, *The Treasury of Tabriz: The Great Il-Khanid Compendium* (Leiden: Rozenberg Publishers, 2010), pp. 43–58; Iraj Afshar, 'Noskheh-bargardān-e "Safīneh-ye Tabriz"', *Nāmeḥ-ye Bahārestān* iii: 2 (Autumn–Winter 2002/03), p. 529.
 16. See A. Seyed-Gohrab, 'A Mystical Reading of Nezami's Use of Nature in the Haft Peykar', in J. C. Bürgel and C. van Ruymbeke, eds, *A Key to the Treasures of Hakim: Artistic and Humanistic Aspects of Nizami Ganjavi's Khamsa* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), pp. 181–93.
 17. See A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 219–20.
 18. These quatrains appear on p. 523. For the sake of convenience, I give the first line of each of these quatrains: 1) *na dar pey-ye har 'eshveh dahi shāyad raft*; 2) *ey khājah bedān kin falak-e bihudeh row*; 3) *ān māyeh ze donā keh khori yā pushi*. The quatrains by Zarkub and Qomri appear on p. 527.
 19. See Jamāl Khalil Shirvāni, *Nozhat al-majāles*, ed. M. A. Riyāhi, 2nd edn (Tehran: 'Elmi, 1996 [1987]); Farid al-Din 'Attār, *Mokhtār-nāmeḥ*, ed. M. R. Shafī'i Kadkani (Tehran: Tus, 1996). For an analysis of these two collections, see A. Seyed-Gohrab, 'The Flourishing of Persian Quatrains after Omar Khayyam', in E. Yarshater, ed., *The History of Persian Literature*, vol. II (London: I.B. Tauris, forthcoming); see also Daniela Meneghini, s.v. 'Mokhtār-nāma' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
 20. For a discussion on these poets, see S. Sharma, 'Wandering Quatrains and Women Poets in the *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār fi al-ruba'iyāt*', in Seyed-Gohrab and McGlinn *Treasury of Tabriz*, pp. 158–9.
 21. Ibid.
 22. *Latā'ef*, p. 520. The quatrain is also repeated under the name of the same author in *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*, p. 596.
 23. *Latā'ef*, p. 521; *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*, p. 608.
 24. *Latā'ef*, p. 521; *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*, p. 608.
 25. *Latā'ef*, p. 531; *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*, p. 605.
 26. *Latā'ef*, p. 531; *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*, p. 607.
 27. *Latā'ef*, p. 531; *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*, p. 600.

28. *Latā'ef*, p. 532; *Kholāsāt al-ash'ār*, p. 604. This quatrain is also cited in F. Meier, *Die schöne Mahsatī: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des persischen vierzeilers*, vol. I (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner verlag, 1963), p. 333. Meier reads the first word as *khandān* ('smiling'), which is certainly possible, but due to the contrast with the second line ('And in the months of winter, you brought the season of spring'), I prefer *chandān* (many) with an emphasis on the abundance of roses, creating the feeling of spring in the lover.
29. Shabestari, *Sa'ādat-nāmeḥ*, p. 8, l. 29.

Images of Iranian Kingship on Secular Ilkhanid Tiles

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By the first quarter of the thirteenth century CE, tiles had become one of the major means of adorning both the exterior and interior surfaces of buildings constructed for powerful individuals in Iran, religious and secular alike. In addition to glazing in vivid colours, some types of tiles bore moulded reliefs and/or paintings for decoration. For secular buildings, such reliefs and paintings included inscriptions, animal or human figures, and scenes from epic narratives or legendary historical events. These inscriptions and representations were not only decorative, but may also have been intended to express the significance of the building in which they were located. In particular, the tiles adorning the palaces of rulers may well have exhibited images of Iranian kingship for the appreciation of both residents and visitors.

The aim of this chapter is to identify the images that can be associated with Iranian kingship among secular tile decorations during the Ilkhanid period; to investigate the meanings of these images and why they might have been thought to be appropriate for representation; and, finally, to look at how their use changed during the rule of the Ilkhans.

Images Signifying Mongol Sovereignty: Chinese Animals and Iconography

The Ilkhans were a line of Mongol princes who governed Iran and Iraq for about one hundred years between the mid thirteenth and mid fourteenth centuries (1258–1353). These descendants of Chinggis Khan (r. 1206–27) ruled under the suzerainty of the Great Khan of the Mongol Empire (1206–1388), the emperor of the Chinese Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). The only well-preserved palace structures from the Ilkhanid period are at Takht-e Soleyman, the site of a summer palace built during the 1270s by the second Ilkhan, Abaqa (r. 1265–82), in the mountainous Azerbaijan region of north-western Iran. Tiles in a variety of techniques, shapes, colours and motifs were used to embellish the walls of these palace buildings. The tiles decorating this palace bear Mongolian and Chinese motifs, as is to be expected of a Mongolian ruler whose sovereign was the Great Khan, the Chinese emperor residing mainly in Dadu (present-day

Beijing). The tiles also employ Iranian motifs, as they were prepared by Iranian potters who applied established Iranian pottery techniques in their manufacture. I have discussed the Mongolian aspects of these tile decorations several times.¹ To summarise, the designs and motifs of Chinese origin were introduced at Takht-e Soleyman, most probably at the request of the Mongol ruler or his officers, who were familiar with the decoration of Mongolian imperial palaces in China and Mongolia and wished to emulate them. These motifs include the Chinese lion, deer, heron, dragon and phoenix.

Lion, deer, and heron are auspicious animals in Chinese culture and tradition. The lions on the tiles appear to be modelled after the Chinese iconography of ‘the lion playing with an embroidered ball’, a symbol of fertility, in which a lion with a knotted tail holds in its mouth a tufted band with an embroidered ball.² Hexagonal tiles excavated at Takht-e Soleyman bear this motif of the Chinese lion rendered in relief. These tiles use the newly invented technique of *lājvardineh* (overglaze decoration of enamel painting and gold leaf), based on existing Iranian pottery techniques (Figure 5.1). These hexagonal, *lājvardineh* lion tiles were combined with tiles depicting crouching deer to comprise decorative panels at Takht-e Soleyman (Figure 5.2). Similar deer designs were used in Mongolian artefacts from the same period; it is possible that the antelope motif, another auspicious design especially popular during the Jin period (1115–1234) of the Jurchen dynasty in northern China and Manchuria, inspired this crouching deer motif.³ Whatever the original species of animal, it is clear that a motif foreign to Iran was introduced here to form panels with another foreign motif.



Fig. 5.1. *Lājvardineh* hexagonal tile depicting the lion playing with an embroidered ball. Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. National Museum of Iran, Tehran, 21537.



Fig. 5.2. *Lājvardineh* hexagonal tile depicting the crouching deer. Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. National Museum of Iran, Tehran, 21722.

Tiles with Chinese dragons and tiles with Chinese phoenixes always share the same shape, dimensions and techniques (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). This fact indicates that a dragon and a phoenix formed a pair in the same decorative programmes, to be installed on the same wall surfaces side by side. The designs of these mythical animals on the Takht-e Soleyman tiles are faithful copies of the Chinese originals. Both the dragon and the phoenix were Chinese symbols of sovereignty adopted by the Mongols.



Fig. 5.3. Lustre-painted frieze tile depicting the dragon. Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 541-1900. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The *Heida shilue* ('Summary of the Mongols') by Peng Daya, an envoy from the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279) to the Mongols in 1237, during the reign of Ögödei (r. 1229–41), reports that the Mongols wore clothes with motifs of the sun and moon and the dragon and phoenix, regardless of rank.⁴ The use of dragon and phoenix images at the Mongol Yuan court can also be confirmed in a variety of other documents.⁵ In 1314, however, a code was issued to prohibit officials from using certain colours and designs on robes and other commodities – in particular, the dragon with five claws and two horns, and the phoenix were banned.⁶ Thus the use of this specific type of dragon and the phoenix became officially exclusive to the Mongol Yuan emperors.



Fig. 5.4. Lustre-painted frieze tile depicting the phoenix. Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 12.49.4. www.metmuseum.org

There is no literature confirming that the five-clawed dragon was used exclusively by emperors before the code of 1314. At Takht-e Soleyman, the dragons depicted on the tiles have four claws. Whether this was because the Ilkhans were hesitant to use the image of the five-clawed dragon symbolising the Great Khan, or because the iconography of the five-clawed dragon had not yet been fully established, is uncertain. In any case, the motifs of the dragon and phoenix seem to have been regarded as appropriate for the decoration of a palace for a Mongol ruler even in Iran, perhaps in deference to his suzerain who embraced their Chinese symbolism. During the Ilkhanid period, the dragon and phoenix were considered symbols of Mongol or Ilkhanid kingship.

A few frieze tiles depicting the dragon and phoenix (albeit in less sophisticated styles of painting) have survived, and can be dated to the early fourteenth century at the latest, but apparently after Takht-e Soleyman.⁷ This suggests that these motifs remained in use for a few later generations of the Ilkhans. After the Ilkhanid period, however, designs featuring the dragon and phoenix ceased to have specific connotations of kingship. In Iran they were treated simply as two of multiple exotic motifs imported from China, and did not always form a pair, as can be seen in the drawings in the Timurid albums from the fifteenth century.⁸ In fact, the iconography of the Chinese dragon had already been assimilated to represent an *ezhdehā* – an evil Iranian dragon. This

can be seen in the manuscripts of the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi (934–1025), and even during the Ilkhanid reign, in manuscripts from the first half of the fourteenth century.⁹ This disparity in treatment by the Iranians suggests that the dragon and phoenix were most probably regarded as symbols of Mongol or Ilkhanid kingship only by the Ilkhans themselves and their officials. To Iranians, these foreign images did not signal Iranian kingship.

Shahnameh Quotations and Other Persian Inscriptions

On the other hand, there are also tiles at Takht-e Soleyman imbued with Iranian significance. These are the tiles featuring Persian inscriptions and images of Iranian origin.

Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani first called attention to the fact that quotations from the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi are inscribed on frieze tiles from Takhte Soleyman (Figure 5.5).¹⁰ The *Shahnameh*, a national epic completed in 1010, deals with the history of Iranian kings from the mythical beginning of Iran to the end of the Sasanian dynasty. Many of the quotations are opening passages from the Preface, the Story of Rostam and Sohrāb in the ‘Book of Keykāvus’, and the Story of Rostam and Esfandiyār in the ‘Book of Goshtāsp’.¹¹ The quotations were probably selected from the beginning of these stories instead of the climax narratives because of the Iranian literary tradition of memorising and reciting epic verses; such recitations are triggered by the opening passages. All of the quotations may allude to the entire book of the *Shahnameh* rather than serving as reminders of specific scenes in the epic. The very beginning of the Preface would be a representative verse, as would be the start of the famous Story of Rostam and Sohrāb, in which the Iranian hero Rostam kills his son Sohrāb without knowing his true identity. Another famous Rostam tragedy, the Story of Rostam and Esfandiyār, in which Rostam kills Esfandiyār, a legitimate Iranian crown prince, would also serve to remind visitors to Takht-e Soleyman of the *Shahnameh*.



Fig. 5.5. Lustre-painted frieze tile with inscription of *Shahnameh* verse. Excavated at Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, I. 4/67.35.2. Foto: Johannes Kramer.

The Iranian potters who designed the tiles may have regarded these written references to the epic of Iranian kings as suitable decoration for the palace of an 'Iranian' ruler, even if he was Mongol. Perhaps the potters were simply following the traditional practice of decorating palaces with *Shahnameh* inscriptions, which had already been established in Iran by then. Secular inscriptions on palace tiles are also a clear parallel of the Qur'anic quotations written on the frieze tiles for decorating religious buildings of the same period. It is uncertain, however, whether the verses from this popular national epic decorated only palaces of rulers or also palaces of any notables.

The lustre-painted eight-pointed star tiles that constitute tile panels in dados also have inscriptions on the edges. The inscriptions consist of long quotations from the *Shahnameh*, many of which are again from the beginning of the story of Rostam and Sohrāb – a combination of a few different *robā'is* (four-hemistich poems) and/or a few *do-beytis* (two-hemistich poems), and sometimes a date. As Abdollah Ghouhani has noted, these verses were composed by a variety of Persian poets.¹² Since some are panegyric poets while others are mystical poets, and their provenances and active periods vary, it does not seem that there were clear criteria for the selection of these poems. The poems written on the tiles may have simply been an anthology of poems that happened to be very popular among Iranian people at that time. An anthology would also be reflective of the Iranian literary habit of memorising and reciting poems.

Although many of the inscriptions on the Takht-e Soleyman star-shaped tiles are from the *Shahnameh*, it is possible that these Iranian decorative elements simply reflected the local traditions at the time, and did not necessarily symbolise Iranian kingship.

Images of Royal Hunts and Battles on Frieze Tiles

There are also images on frieze tiles from Takht-e Soleyman featuring hunts and battles, moulded in relief and painted. Though the figures depicted are anonymous, the crowns on their heads suggest that they are royal figures. A number of these frieze tiles can be categorised into three major groups by size.

The first group consists of large tiles measuring 52×45 cm, and featuring moulded reliefs as decoration; each surface is divided into three horizontal zones, with an upper border depicting animals and a lower border of floral scrolls. All the tiles in this group excavated at Takht-e Soleyman are decorated in lustre painting, but there is one tile owned by the Miho Museum in Japan (SS1480) that is made from the same mould as these frieze tiles, but in the technique of *lājvardineh*.¹³ The main field of this tile type can be reconstructed from the Takht-e Soleyman tiles and the Miho tile as a hunting scene of a king, distinguished by his crown, attended by a courtier with a falcon and a leopard (Figure 5.6). On another tile type of the same dimensions, two horsemen are hunting birds with bows and arrows (Figure 5.7). The princely figures of these

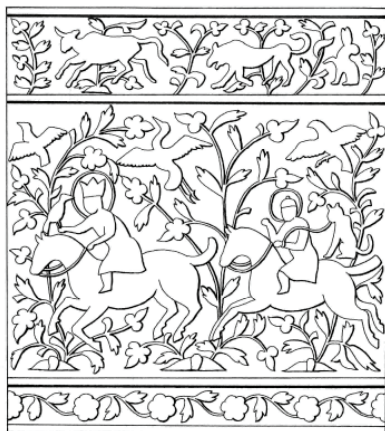


Fig. 5.6. Moulded relief design of a frieze tile depicting a hunting scene of a king, who is distinguished by his crown, attended by a courtier with a falcon and a leopard. Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. Drawing by the author.



Fig. 5.7. Moulded relief design of a frieze tile depicting a hunting scene of two horsemen hunting birds with bows and arrows. Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. Drawing by the author.

two tile types lack specific attributes and cannot be identified with any historical rulers or ancient kings appearing in the *Shahnameh*. The scenes on these tiles may have been general representations of royal hunting – a typical activity at a summer palace like Takht-e Soleyman.

The second group of frieze tiles, measuring 32×32 cm, also feature moulded reliefs of hunting scenes in the main field. On one tile type, two unidentified horsemen with swords or spears are hunting a quadruped similar to a deer (Figure 5.8). Its entire relief can be reconstructed from various tiles excavated at Takht-e Soleyman, and also from other tiles with the same moulded relief, such as those preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (10.9.1)¹⁴ and Berlin's Museum für Islamische Kunst (I. 3903b).¹⁵

Another tile type in this second group shows Bahrām Gur hunting a gazelle on camelback. The complete design of this tile type can be reconstructed from tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum (1841-1876) (Figure 5.9), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (10.56.2),¹⁶ and other collections with tiles made from the same mould as those excavated from Takht-e Soleyman. This tile type depicts one of the most famous episodes related in the *Shahnameh* and other epics: Bahrām Gur, the Sasanian king Bahrām V (r. 420–38), hunts gazelles while his slave girl Āzādeh, who is not impressed by Bahrām's feat of shooting arrows, continues to play the harp. The scene is easily recognisable thanks to the two figures on camelback, one shooting an arrow and the other playing the harp.

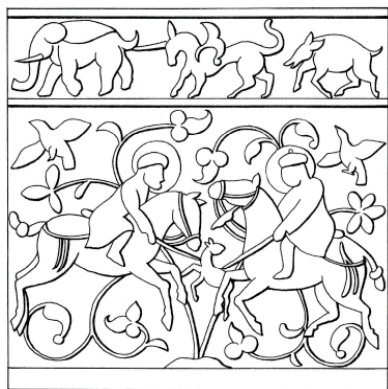


Fig. 5.8. Moulded relief design of a frieze tile depicting a hunting scene of two unidentified horsemen with swords or spears hunting a quadruped similar to a deer. Takht-e Soleymān, 1270s. Drawing by the author.



Fig. 5.9. Lustre-painted frieze tile depicting Bahrām Gur hunting with Azādeh. Takht-e Soleymān, 1270s. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1841-1876. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Bahrām Gur, son of Yazdegerd I (r. 399–420), is one of the most popular kings in Persian literature and art. He was a victorious military leader, who defended his kingdom from invasion by the Hephthalites in eastern Iran. He is also popular because of his hunting exploits and romances,¹⁷ and his nickname *gur* comes from ‘onager’, one of the wild animals he loved to hunt. The episode depicted on the tile contains both of these elements: hunting together with his beloved slave girl. Images of this episode already existed on late Sasanian seals, and the iconography survived through the Islamic period. From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, it was often represented on tiles, enamel-painted wares, and metalwork in Iran.¹⁸ Although it is difficult to determine whether the iconography of the episode was originally derived from the narratives of the *Shahnameh*, it is possible that the potters of the Takht-e Soleyman tiles were at least aware of the story’s existence in the epic from which they sourced the numerous quotations to paint on the tiles.

The Bahrām Gur scene could certainly have been intended to portray Iranian kingship. However, considering the fact that it was combined with an anonymous hunting scene, it appears that the subject of the frieze was also royal hunting, like the large tiles in the first group. In other words, the tiles in the second frieze do not seem to have borne the clear political function of asserting Iranian kingship, as can usually be expected for royal images. Rather, they were a simple indication of the royal activities at the palace.

The third group of tiles featuring figurative images are rectangular frieze tiles measuring 24.5 × 43 cm, and depict hunting and battle scenes moulded in relief and painted in lustre.¹⁹ Three different design types are recognisable, but

all the figures seem to be anonymous, lacking specific attributes and allowing no association with *Shahnameh* episodes or any historical events.

The scenes of royal hunts and battles, including the Bahrām Gur scene, are also often represented on contemporary Iranian metalwork and pottery vessels, and it is difficult to ascertain differences in intent by the artists, if any, between the images on the tiles used at the Ilkhanid palace and those on the vessels. Did the potters actually wish to include specifically Iranian royal elements on the tiles? The fact that three different friezes were dedicated mainly to hunting, however, suggests that the subjects of the friezes focused simply on activities at the summer palace.

Depictions of Iranian Royalty: Feridun and Mahmud of Ghazna

On the other hand, there are also tiles that contain images that can be more clearly read as both 'Iranian' and 'royal'. They are the frieze tiles measuring 28 × 28 cm excavated at Takht-e Soleyman. The moulded relief of the tiles can be reconstructed as a scene in which a figure with a mace is mounted on a humped cow. This warrior is accompanied by two figures on foot carrying shields and swords or spears. Fairly large fragments of this tile type were excavated at the site, and one of the largest is now in the Museum für Islamische Kunst (I. 13/69.19 c3) (Figure 5.10). The figure mounted on the cow is identified as Feridun, a mythical Iranian hero. According to the *Shahnameh*, he defeated the fifth king, the tyrant Zakhāk, and became the sixth king of the oldest Iranian legendary dynasty, the Pishdādi. The cow is Bermāyeh, the nurse cow that fed the baby Feridun on her milk and was later killed in the battle against Zakhāk.²⁰ Feridun's bull-headed mace is one of the most important elements referred to in the *Shahnameh* story, and Feridun is often represented with this attribute on enamel-painted pottery and inlaid metalwork objects from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.²¹

The fragments excavated at the site exhibit the technique of monochrome turquoise glazing, but without any overglaze painting. Two complete tiles made from the same mould but manufactured in the technique of lustre painting on an opaque white glaze exist in two museums in the United States. One is in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore



Fig. 5.10. Monochrome-glazed frieze tile depicting Feridun. Excavated at Takht-e Soleyman, 1270s. Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, I. 13/69.19 c3. Foto: Johannes Kramer.

(48.1296) (Figure 5.11), and the other is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1916–170).²² The lower borders of both tiles have inscriptions quoted from the *Shahnameh*, painted in lustre, but the inscriptions are unrelated to the subject of the main field. The one in Baltimore has a quotation from the beginning of the Story of Bizhan and Manizheh in the ‘Book of Keykhosrow’, and the one in Philadelphia has a quotation from the Preface, neither of which has to do with Feridun.²³



Fig. 5.11. Lustre-painted frieze tile depicting Feridun. Takht-e Soleymān, 1270s. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 48.1296. Image credit: The Walters Art Museum.

Two other lustre-painted tiles may well have belonged to the same decorative programmes as the tiles in Baltimore and Philadelphia, since they have the same dimensions (28 × 28 cm) and are in the same format, with an upper border depicting a procession of three animals and a lower border with painted inscriptions. The tiles are preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (X.107)²⁴ and in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.5.222) (Figure 5.12). These two tiles bear the same moulded relief in the main field, which shows a procession of an elephant carrying a palanquin, with a princely figure and two men on foot with swords. The inscription on the New York tile could be a quotation from the Story of Siyāvush in the ‘Book of Keykāvus’ of the *Shahnameh*, but that of the Los Angeles tile is too faded to be read.

The identity of the princely figure mounted on an elephant, as depicted on Iranian tiles, pottery vessels and metalwork from the end of the twelfth century



Fig. 5.12. Luster-painted frieze tile depicting a procession of an elephant carrying a palanquin with a princely figure and two men on foot with swords. *Takht-e Soleymān*, 1270s. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.73.5.222. www.lacma.org.

to the mid fourteenth century, has remained a mystery ever since A. U. Pope published photographs of several enamel-painted vessels in his *Survey of Persian Art* (1939).²⁵ The predominant interpretation has been that which was first suggested by Pope himself – namely, that the figure is Bahrām Gur accompanying his new bride Sapinud, daughter of an Indian king, as narrated in the *Shahnameh*.²⁶ Melikian-Chirvani explains that it fits another episode in the *Shahnameh* – the episode in which Zāl is mounted on a male elephant and taken to Manuchehr by Sām.²⁷ Eleanor Sims suggested recently that this might be the scene of a new king parading around town on a white elephant, as in the animal fable of *Kalileh and Demneh*.²⁸ However, none of these episodes is famous enough to be selected for representation on vessels, particularly on tiles that would have decorated royal buildings.

Thus I suggest a new interpretation for this figure in the palanquin carried by an elephant – namely, that he may actually be Mahmud of Ghazna, popular in Persian literature and historically associated with elephants.

Mahmud of Ghazna, or Mahmud ibn Sebüktegin (r. 998–1030), was the third ruler of the Ghaznavid dynasty (962–1186) in Khurasan, Afghanistan, and northern India. The Ghaznavids were originally Turkish slave commanders

under the Samanids (875–999), an Iranian dynasty of Central Asia and north-east Iran. During Mahmud's reign, the Ghaznavids achieved their greatest territorial reach by conquering the non-Muslim lands in India, where they amassed great wealth. In 1966, Clifford Edmund Bosworth published a short but very useful essay on Mahmud's reputation during his time, and later in Persian literature, until the thirteenth century.²⁹ According to this essay, Mahmud was wealthy and victorious, but also an oppressive monarch, taking severe measures to fund his large army and ambitiously seeking religious legitimisation of his battles. Bosworth notes that, though the poet 'Attār reproaches Mahmud as a despotic monarch, this position is uncommon. In Persian literature, Mahmud was generally depicted as an ideal, pious king with wisdom and wealth. Most importantly, he was regarded as 'the hammer of heretics and implanter of Islam' on Iran's eastern frontier.

In the cultural sphere, the Ghaznavids adopted Iranian traditions and used Persian as their official language. Mahmud is well-known as a patron of Persian literature, and is well-represented in written works. Contemporary court poets such as 'Onsori (ca. 961–1039) and Farrokhi (eleventh century) composed panegyric verses for Mahmud; Biruni (973–after 1050) wrote his book on Indian sciences known as the *India* as a result of accompanying Mahmud on his campaign in India; and, finally, Ferdowsi dedicated his *Shahnameh* to Mahmud. In the *Shahnameh*, there is one ode to Mahmud at the end of the Preface, and three more can be found in the Books of Keykhosrow (before the final war between Keykhosrow and Afrāsiyāb), Goshtāsp (before the Seven Stages of Esfandiyār), and the Ashkanians, in which Mahmud is praised in the middle or at the end of the narratives. Mahmud is also the only Muslim ruler represented in the illustrations of *Shahnameh* manuscripts from various periods. He is generally depicted in his court with his poets, receiving Ferdowsi.

In later Persian literature, episodes featuring Mahmud are included in the didactic prose of the *Qābus-nāme* of Keykāvus (the Ziyarid ruler of Tabaristan and Gurgan, r. 1049–ca. 87), the *Siyāsat-nāme* of Nezām al-Molk (1018–92), and the *Chahār maqāla* of Nezāmi 'Aruzi (twelfth century). His relationship with the Turkish male slave Ayāz provided a good subject for Persian writers, with an Ayāz episode first appearing in the *Qābus-nāme*. In Persian poetry, Mahmud is mentioned by almost all of the famous Persian poets, including Nezāmi Ganjavi (1141–1209), 'Attār (ca. 1136–ca. 1230), Rumi (1207–73), Sa'di (?–1292) and Hafiz (1326–90). It appears that Mahmud had already become a legendary king in the late eleventh century, only fifty years after his death.

I believe that the elephant, a peculiar mount, must have been a clear signal to medieval viewers as to the identity of the figure, and an historical association can easily be drawn between Mahmud and elephants. The Ghaznavids were the first Muslim rulers to use a great number of elephants in battle. It is recorded that Mahmud's elephant stables in Kabul housed 1,670 elephants of war

in 1031. There is also a written record that he sent elephants as gifts to the ‘Abbasid caliph in Baghdad in response to the caliph’s acknowledgement of his victory in the east (the caliphate bestowed honourable titles upon Mahmud).³⁰ These historical facts regarding elephants are also reflected in Persian literature. For example, in the odes to Mahmud in the *Shahnameh*, Ferdowsi twice alludes to the might of his ‘seven hundred elephants’.³¹ In the odes to his patrons, Nezami Ganjavi often refers to Mahmud as a point of comparison, and mentions ‘Mahmud’s elephant’ in *Leyli o Majnun* and the *Sharafnāme*.

Mahmud is also represented with an elephant in manuscript illustrations, such as in the Ilkhanid manuscript of the *Jāmi’ al-tavārikh* of Rashid al-Din (1247–1318) from ca. 1314–15, now in the Edinburgh University Library (MS Arab 20). In this manuscript, Mahmud appears in sixteen paintings, and in five of them he is shown in a palanquin on an elephant in battle.³²

Now let us return to the representations of the princely figure in a palanquin on an elephant. This motif is seen on the four enamel-painted bowls published by Pope, all of which show a mahout handling the elephant. On three of the bowls, another figure on the elephant is depicted behind the palanquin; two representations are dark-skinned with unclear faces. This second figure on the elephant has often been identified as Sapinud, an Indian princess, but the figure cannot be female because of the exposed upper body. It may have represented the Turkish male slave Ayāz, who is usually known to have been ‘good-looking’.³³ One bowl, now owned by the Keir Collection (no. 143), is dated to Safar 616/April 1219, and depicts a half-naked figure with fair skin behind the mahout and princely figure (Figure 5.13).³⁴ This bowl was heavily retouched



Fig. 5.13. Bowl, Iran: dated Safar A.H. 616/April 1219 Fritware; stain – and overglaze-painted decoration (Minai’i [enameled] ware) The Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art K.1.2014.313.

when it was published in Pope's book, but it has since been cleaned. In its current state, it can be seen that there are two figures on foot, one marching before the elephant and carrying an unidentified object, and the other behind the elephant with a shield. The revelation of these two figures indicates that this particular scene depicts a pre- or post-battle moment.

The motif of a warrior mounted on an elephant in battle can be found on two other artefacts. One is a monochrome-glazed turquoise tile with a moulded relief in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.5.750).³⁵ Unfortunately the relief is not very clear, but there does appear to be a warrior in a palanquin fighting a horseman. The other example of this motif is an inlaid metal bowl in the Victoria and Albert Museum (760–1889), dated to 752 A.H./1351–52.³⁶ It shows a royal figure (with a crown and an axe) mounted on an elephant and fighting a horseman. This latter example is notably included in a decorative band, together with the motif of Bahrām Gur and Āzādeh on a camel and the motif of Feridun on a cow. It seems that scenes with distinctive mounts were selected to aid viewers in the identification of the figures, perhaps to include royal Iranian themes in the decorative programme, and to add variety to an otherwise monotonous design populated by horsemen only.

When we examine the lustre-painted tiles in New York and Los Angeles again, the relief of the elephant procession appears to depict Mahmud in a triumphal march, since the figures do not carry shields. If this identification and interpretation are correct, then these tiles were most probably combined with the Feridun tiles of the same dimensions in one decorative programme, and the juxtaposition of Feridun and Mahmud in a single frieze may very well have been intentional. Both figures are associated with the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi – even though Mahmud did not live in ancient times like the rulers in the epic but only about two hundred years previously. Both are Iranian kings who saved their country: Feridun restored justice to Iran after Zakhāk's tyranny; Mahmud defended Islam against infidels. Furthermore, both rulers could easily have been identified by their special mounts, at least by medieval viewers. The potters probably considered this combination appropriate to decorate the palace of a ruler of Iran, even if the ruler was a Mongol who had not converted to Islam. Although the lustre-painted Mahmud tiles were not excavated at Takht-e Soleyman, they can easily be paired with the lustre-painted Feridun tiles (in Baltimore and Philadelphia), whose mould is identical to the mould of tiles excavated at the site. This fact indicates a strong possibility that the turquoise-glazed Feridun tiles found at Takht-e Soleyman were once paired with Mahmud tiles.

Just as the anonymous hunting and battle scenes, including the Bahrām Gur scene, are to be seen on both palace tiles and contemporary pottery and metalwork vessels, so too are the images of Feridun and Mahmud. These valuable vessels could have been used by non-royal but wealthy persons – and these royal images were not, in fact, monopolised by rulers. In this sense, the

significance of these images may have been in their ‘Iranian’, and not their ‘royal’, character. However, when the images of Feridun and Mahmud are combined in one decorative programme, there is a notable emphasis on their shared reputation as ‘just and fair Iranian kings’.

The Iranian potters who manufactured the tiles had accepted Chinese iconography upon the request of the Mongols, but they also continued to employ well-established Iranian decorative programmes for palatial residences. But there is one important scene absent from the main fields of frieze tiles found at Takht-e Soleyman – namely, the enthronement and banquet scene of a seated ruler, which is often represented both on pottery and metalwork vessels of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This is one of the favourite motifs for star-shaped lustre-painted dado tiles from the same period. Did these tiles simply not survive? Only one fragment of a frieze tile from Takht-e Soleyman includes a seated figure in its upper border, but the main field does not remain.³⁷ Similar seated royal figures and standing courtiers can be seen, in combination with Persian inscriptions, on several other tiles from the Ilkhanid period, but the significance of these figures is not clear.³⁸

The Later Ilkhanid Period:

The Early Fourteenth Century and Beyond

The images of Iranian kings seem to have been less popular in the later part of the Ilkhanid reign (the first half of the fourteenth century), when scenes from the *Shahnameh* and scenes depicting hunting and battling were rarely found on frieze tiles. Instead, frieze tiles have been found with dragons and phoenixes moulded in relief and painted in lustre, tiles with non-mythical animals (Figure 5.14), and tiles with inscriptions quoted from the *Shahnameh*. There is



Fig. 5.14. Lustre-painted frieze tile depicting a lion hunting a bull. Iran, early fourteenth century. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 543-1900. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

also a series of rectangular underglaze frieze tiles with deer and flowers moulded in relief and painted in cobalt-blue, black and white.³⁹ But it seems that frieze tiles from the first half of the fourteenth century rarely bear scenes involving human figures.

What caused this shift in Ilkhanid frieze tile decoration? Although it is impossible to know the precise reasons for this change, it seems that the Mongol rulers wished to have their walls decorated with representations of animals rather than with human figures from Iranian history and tradition. It is possible that they did not glean any meaning from the figural scenes of the frieze tiles, especially those of specific rulers mentioned in the *Shahnameh*.

The excavation reports of the Rab'-e Rashidi near Tabriz, the city founded by Rashid al-Din, or of Sultaniyya, the capital city founded by the eighth Ilkhan Öljeitü (r. 1304–16), that have been published so far do not include tiles with figurative scenes.⁴⁰ If a large part of the tile decoration becomes known at these sites, various aspects of tile decoration in the Ilkhanid palaces of the early fourteenth century will be clarified.

The techniques of tile decoration changed drastically in the fourteenth century after the Ilkhanid period. Dado tiles and frieze tiles of lustre painting, *lājvardineh* or underglaze painting were replaced with tile decoration covering entire wall surfaces, using tile mosaics or *cuerda seca* tiles consisting of vegetal or geometric motifs and inscriptions. The use of tiles with human figures did not become popular again until the seventeenth century, when *cuerda seca* tiles with anonymous court scenes were used in Safavid palaces. The depiction of *Shahnameh* kings and heroes on tiles was revived only in the nineteenth century, during the Qajar period (1796–1925). Such images were depicted without any pronounced attributes or special settings, but they are identifiable by the inscriptions of their names. Unlike the potters of the Ilkhanid period, the Qajar artists did not endeavour to differentiate each king simply through visual representation.

Notes:

1. Masuya, Tomoko, 'The Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān', unpublished PhD dissertation, New York University (1997); Masuya, Tomoko, 'Ilkhanid Courtly Life', in L. Komaroff and S. Carboni, eds, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York/New Haven/London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Yale University Press, 2002).
2. Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon* (London: British Museum Publications, 1984), pp. 110–4; Yolande Crowe, 'Late Thirteenth-Century Persian Tilework and Chinese Textiles', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, New Series 5 (1991), p. 157.
3. For a deer tile from Takht-e Soleyman, see Masuya: 'Ilkhanid Courtly Life', Fig. 93. For deer/antelope representations from China and Mongolia, see Adam T. Kessler, *Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heritage of Genghis Khan* (Los Angeles: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 1994), Fig. 101; James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), pp. 114–5 (cat. no. 29).
4. Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 107.
5. Masuya, 'Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān', pp. 571–3.
6. Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, Zhonghua Shuju edition (Beijing, 1976), vol. 7, pp. 1,942–3 (Chapter 78).
7. For example, those in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (1564a and b) and the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (POT 790). See Yolande Crowe, 'Change in Style of Persian Ceramics in the Late Part of 7/13th c.', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* LIX (1985), plate IVb; Komaroff and Carboni, *Legacy of Genghis Khan*, cat. no. 101 (Fig. 59).
8. David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 85–147.
9. For example, an illustration of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Small *Shahnameh*, datable from the 1330s. See Marie Lukens Swietochowski and Stefano Carboni, *Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images: Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340s* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), cat. nos 30, 32.
10. Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, 'Le livre des rois, miroir du destin II: Takht-e Soleyman et la symbolique du Shāh-Nāme', *Studia Iranica* 20 (1991), pp. 33–148; Melikian-Chirvani, *Les frises du Shāh Nāme dans l'architecture iranienne sous les Ilkhān* (Paris: Association pour l'Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 1996).
11. For the *Shahnameh* quotations inscribed on the frieze tiles and star-shaped tiles from Takht-e Soleyman, see Masuya, 'Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān', pp. 400–5, 484–504, 608–13, 691–8, 716–20.
12. Abdollah Ghouchani, *Persian Poetry on the Tiles of Takht-i Sulaymān (13th Century)* (Tehran: Iran University Press, 1992).
13. Komaroff and Carboni, *Legacy of Genghis Khan*, cat. no. 94 (Fig. 98).
14. Ibid., cat. no. 98 (Fig. 50), at metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/445977?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=10.9.1&pos=1 (accessed 18 April 2015).
15. Richard Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1950), pl. 18 upper.

16. Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1994), Fig. 2, at metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-Online/search/445993?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=10.56.2&pos=1, (accessed 18 April 2015).
17. Otokar Klíma, 'v. Bahrām V Gōr', and William L. Hanaway Jr., 'vi. Bahrām V Gōr in Persian Legend and Literature', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* III/5, pp. 514–22, q.v. 'Bahrām (2)'; available online at iranicaonline.org/articles/bahram-the-name-of-six-sasanian-kings#pt5 and iranicaonline.org/articles/bahram-the-name-of-six-sasanian-kings#pt6 (accessed 18 April 2015).
18. Maria Vittoria Fontana, *La leggenda di Bahrām Gūr e Āzāda* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1986); Eleanor Sims, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and Its Sources* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2002), cat. nos 224–8.
19. Rudolf and Elisabeth Naumann, *Takht-i Suleiman: Ausgrabung des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Iran* (Munich: Prähistorische Staatssammlung, 1976), cat. nos 125–6; Masuya, 'Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān', pp. 547–55.
20. Ahmad Tafazzolī, 'Ferēdūn', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* IX: 5, pp. 531–3. An updated version is available online at iranicaonline.org/articles/feredu- (accessed 18 April 2015).
21. Marianna Shreve Simpson, 'Narrative Allusion and Metaphor in the Decoration of Medieval Islamic Objects', in H. L. Kessler and M. S. Simpson, eds, *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1985), pp. 131–49.
22. E. A. Barber, 'Recently Acquired Ceramics', *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 55 (1916), pp. 36–43, Fig. 2.
23. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, ed., *The Shahnameh (Book of Kings)*, 8 vols. (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988–2008), vol. 3, p. 304, vv. 11–2; vol. 1, p. 11, vv. 110–1.
24. Available at metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/442868?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=X.107&pos=1 (accessed 18 April 2015).
25. Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, eds, *A Survey of Persian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), pl. 663A, 663B, 671, 692A.
26. Ibid., p. 1,564, n. 3; Ernst J. Grube, *Islamic Pottery of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 201; Masuya, 'Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān', pp. 534–5.
27. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World: 8–18th centuries* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982), cat. no. 104.
28. Sims, *Peerless Images*, cat. nos 208–10.
29. C. E. Bosworth, 'Maḥmud of Ghazna in Contemporary Eyes and in Later Persian Literature', *Iran* 4 (1966), pp. 85–92.
30. C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994–1040* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963), pp. 115–9; Bosworth, 'Maḥmud of Ghazna', pp. 85–8.
31. Arthur George Warner and Edmond Warner, transl., *The Shāhnāma of Firdausi* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1905–25), I, p. 112; IV, p. 140.
32. Fols 115b, 119a, 123b, 126b, and 127b. Available at images.is.ed.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/UoEsha~4~4~64742~103064?sort=work_creator_details%2Cwork_shelfmark%2Cwork_source_page_no%2Cwork_title&qvq=q:9999999;sort:work_creator_details%2Cwork_shelfmark%2Cwork_source_page_no%2Cwork_title;lc:UoEsha~4~4&mi=0&trs=1 (accessed 12 June 2018).

33. Jalal Matini, 'Ayāz, Abu'l-Najm', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* III: 2, pp. 133–4. An updated version is available online at iranicaonline.org/articles/ayaz-abul-najm-b (accessed 18 April 2015).
34. Pope and Ackerman, *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 692A; E. J. Grube, *Islamic Pottery*, cat. no. 143.
35. See collections.lacma.org/node/240250 (accessed 18 April 2015). In the Victoria and Albert Museum, there is a turquoise-glazed tile panel for one half of a tympanum, with a relief of a scene with a mahout, three princely figures, and a slave (?) mounted on an elephant (C.262–1919). Its inscriptions appear to have been repaired. The subject of the relief is uncertain, and it is difficult to associate it with Mahmud. See collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O83418/panel-unknown/ (accessed 18 April 2015).
36. Melikian-Chirvani, 'Le livre des rois', cat. no. 104; collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O67416/bowl-turanshah (accessed 18 April 2015).
37. R. Naumann, 'Vorbericht über die Ausgrabungen auf dem Taxt-e Soleymān 1973', in *Proceedings of the IInd Annual Symposium on Archaeological Research in Iran: 29th October–1st November 1973* (Tehran: Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research, 1974), Fig. 20.
38. For example, a tile in the T. L. Jacks Collection published in Pope and Ackerman, *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 726B.
39. For example, one in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (B68P6), available at searchcollection.asianart.org/view/objects/asitem/nid/13414 (accessed 18 April 2015).
40. For the recent reports of the sites, see 'A. A. Mirfattāh, 'Soltāniyya'', in M. Y. Kiāni ed., *Iranian Cities*, vol. 4 (Tehran: Jahād-e Dāneshgāhi, 1991), pp. 152–205; L. Ruhangiz, 'Rab'-e Rashidi va Khwājeh Rashid al-Din Fazlallāh Hamadāni', in M. E. Zāre'i, ed., *Islamic Archaeology of Iran: Essays in Honor of Professor Dr. Mohammad Yousef Kiani* (Hamadan: Bu-Ali Sina University Publishers, 2011), pp. 153–82.

Applying a Diachronic Perspective in Reconstructing Precedents for the Illustrations in the Great Mongol Shahnameh

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The Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, as Robert Hillenbrand has stated most clearly, is an important example of what he describes as the revival of Persian culture after the ‘trauma’ of the massive destruction caused by the Mongol Invasion of Iran.¹ A ‘new-found Mongol commitment’ to Persian culture, as marked by the conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam in the year 1295 CE, inaugurated a new flourishing of Persian culture, primarily in architecture, and secondarily in the visual arts of artisans working in such media as metals and textiles. Another form of visual art highlighted by Hillenbrand in this era is the craft of painting images as miniature illustrations for the manuscripts of books. As Hillenbrand stresses, ‘the development of manuscript painting in particular’ was ‘so marked that this is the only art ... which could rival architecture’ in the Mongol era of Iran. In this era, by far the most prominent book that featured the miniature illustrations in its manuscripts was the *Book of Kings*, or *Shahnameh* – a monumental epic poem composed long before by the poet Ferdowsi, at the beginning of the eleventh century CE. In the Mongol era of Iran, the only kind of book that outshone even the *Shahnameh* was of course the Qur’an itself – but the artistic production of luxury copies of this ultimate book was of course divorced from the art of painting miniature illustrations in the Mongol era, as in all other eras of Islam.²

The situation is radically different in the case of painted miniature illustrations for the manuscripts of the *Shahnameh* in the Mongol era. Here we see no separation between text and image. Rather, the visual art of painting is organically linked with the verbal art that produced the poetry we see reflected in the texts of the manuscripts of the *Shahnameh*. In this chapter, I will make this argument by focusing on the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, formerly known as the ‘Demotte’ *Shahnameh*.³

My argument will support the general view of Hillenbrand concerning the production of miniature paintings in the manuscripts of the *Shahnameh* during the Mongol era in the thirteenth century CE.⁴ For Hillenbrand, these paintings reflect an iconographic tradition that precedes that era. This view is validated by Shreve Simpson, whose own work meshes with that of Hillenbrand in studying ‘the general relation between book-painting and luxury ceramics in thirteenth-century Iran’.⁵

Here I note a relevant fact of great importance: variant themes exist in the stories of kings and heroes, as these stories are represented in the visual art of book-painting in both the Mongol era of the thirteenth century and in later eras of Iranian culture. This is related to a second relevant fact: there are comparable variations in the themes of the corresponding stories as they are represented in the verbal art of the *Shahnameh*. Such variations are attested to in all the surviving manuscripts of the *Shahnameh*, whether or not these manuscripts are illustrated.

As I have argued elsewhere on this topic, the variant themes that we find in the textual transmission of this monumental poem can be seen as evidence for the continued existence of the verbal art practised by Ferdowsi in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries CE – and by those who transmitted this poetry in the centuries that followed. This argument extends from a further argument: that the foundations of this verbal art can be reconstructed as an oral poetic tradition, since a primary characteristic of any oral tradition is the very fact of variation in theme as well as in form.⁶

My approach, then, differs from that of literary historians who try to reconstruct an urtext out of the existing texts of the *Shahnameh*, despite the fact that the variations that characterise all these texts cannot be reconstructed to arrive at a single prototype. Similarly, as Shreve Simpson has noted, art historians have occasionally tried to reconstruct prototypes of the illustrations of books like the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, looking for precedents in various art forms dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁷

In this chapter, I propose to combine my approach to variant themes in the texts of the *Shahnameh* with a similar approach to variant themes in the illustrations for these texts, with special reference to the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*. The application of a diachronic perspective in the process of analysing textual variants makes it possible to reconstruct earlier phases of systems that generated the variations found in existing texts. Similarly, in the case of illustrations, a diachronic perspective in analysing the iconographic variants we find in the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, and in other such sources, is needed to reconstruct *an underlying system of visual narratology* that generates the existing iconographic variants.

In using the term *diachronic* here, I have in mind the formulation of Ferdinand de Saussure concerning language *as a structure* – that is, *as a system*. Saussure notes that the synchronic approach concerns a current state of

such a structure, while the diachronic approach examines various phases in the evolution of that structure.⁸

In employing a diachronic perspective, I am considering the evolution of themes both in the verbal art of the *Shahnameh* and in the visual art of the miniature paintings that accompany that verbal art. I focus here on one particular theme as attested to in the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, involving the killing of a monstrous beast by the royal hero Bahrām Gur.⁹

The Unicorn and the Wolf

In Miniature No. 53 of the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, we see the heroic king Bahrām Gur in the act of killing the monster I just mentioned. What does this monster look like? Figure 6.1.



Fig. 6.1. Bahrām Gur fights the Horned Wolf, illustrated folio from a manuscript of the Great Ilkhanid *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), c. 1330-1340. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

But now we run into a problem: except for its horn, the horned monster that is pictured here looks just like a wolf. When Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair describe the picture in their inventory of miniatures from the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, they do in fact refer to the monster as a ‘wolf’.¹⁰ So, can we really say that the beast here is a ‘unicorn’? I ask this question because, as we will see in a moment, one of the words that refer to this beast in the poetry of the *Shahnameh* is *gorg*, which means ‘wolf’ in Persian. So, the beast may be a wolf. I say that the beast *may* be a wolf, and not that it *is* a wolf, since we also find in the language of the poetry another Persian word for such a beast: *karg*. And this word does in fact refer to a beast that is not a wolf – a beast that Ettinghausen designates as a ‘unicorn’.

Visualising a Unicorn

How are we to visualise such a ‘unicorn’? In the monograph of Ettinghausen on the ‘unicorn’ as represented in ‘Muslim iconography’, his thoroughgoing survey shows that there is a staggeringly wide variety of visual features connected with this beast as it is pictured in the miniature paintings of the *Shahnameh* and in other forms of art. The ‘unicorn’ can have the body of a wolf or of a lion, or even of an antelope – and it can have wings, too. In fact, the only feature that the various kinds of ‘unicorn’ really have in common is the single horn.

I quote here with great interest the reaction of Ettinghausen to the vast diversity in the visualisations of the ‘animals’, as he calls them, that fit his category of ‘unicorn’:

Since in many other respects [other than the horn], [the unicorns as pictured in the visual arts] differ from each other, however, the following questions arise: are these animals different unicorns, or are they variants of one and the same animal, and what should we call them? The traditional Western term ‘unicorn’, descriptive as it is, does not give us any clue as to what the medieval Muslim named the animal and what he had in mind when he created such a monster or what he thought when he saw it. The term ‘unicorn’ is, in a way, even misleading, since for a person steeped in the traditions of Western civilization the word has many connotations which have been nurtured by classical, Biblical, early Christian, and medieval beliefs about this animal. The motif has to be studied and understood from the point of view of the medieval Muslim. Only then can it be properly interpreted.

The Picturing of Animals Both Imaginary and Real

We can all agree with the basic thinking that we see reflected in the formulation I just quoted from Ettinghausen, but I note a detail that may lead to a misunderstanding. In his statement, Ettinghausen keeps referring to this

imaginary ‘animal’ as if the ‘unicorn’ were the only variable in play here. But there are also other animals in play *as variables* in visualisations of monstrous beasts defeated by heroes in myth, and some of these beasts are not *imaginary* animals but *real* animals. I mean ‘real’ here in the sense that the verbal art of the *Shahnameh* can use words for real animals (like *gorg* for ‘wolf’) in referring to a monster in a given story just as readily as it uses a word for ‘unicorn’ in referring to a monster in a related story.

Here is another way to put it: the form of a real animal can have a role as a monster in a myth just as readily as the form of an imaginary animal can have such a role. Real animals and imaginary animals can both be described as mythical animals when they play a role in myth, and so they can coexist as variants in myth, since myth itself accommodates variations. One variant of a myth can show a wolf as the monster killed by a royal hero in a given scene, while another variant can show a unicorn killed by the same royal hero in a variant scene.

For us, as outsiders to the myths, the wolf in the role of a monster is real because we know that wolves are real, while a unicorn in the role of a monster is unreal because we cannot match its features realistically with the features of any single real animal. Nevertheless, for those who are insiders to the myths, the wolf and the unicorn can coexist on equal terms as variants in stories about the killing of a monster by a hero. In the myths transmitted by the texts and the images of the *Shahnameh*, the imaginary animals and the real animals are variants of each other.

To drive this point home, I return to the image of the ‘unicorn’ in the miniature that we first considered in the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, in which the single-horned beast killed by Bahrām Gur has the body of a wolf. I now compare that image with a corresponding image in a miniature found in a manuscript of the *Shahnameh* written in 1497, in which the same royal hero Bahrām Gur in the same episode is killing a single-horned beast that has the body of an antelope (Figure 6.2).



Fig. 6.2. Bahrām Gur killing a karg, line drawing, produced by Jill Robbins, of Plate 27 in the monograph of Richard Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn* (1950).

Variations on the Theme of Killing Unicorns or Wolves

The same text of the *Shahnameh* is illustrated in two different ways by these two miniatures, and the Persian word that refers to the beast killed by the hero is *karg*. Ettinghausen interprets this as referring to what he calls a ‘rhinoceros’ – a modern word that he uses as a synonym for his catch-all term ‘unicorn’ in referring to the imaginary beast. Besides Bahrām Gur, as Ettinghausen stresses, there are three other heroes of the *Shahnameh* who are shown in the act of killing a ‘rhinoceros’ – otherwise called a ‘unicorn’ – in the poetry that tells their stories. These heroes are Goshtāsp, Esfandiyār, and Eskandar.¹¹ The clearest examples in the *Shahnameh* are the stories of Eskandar and of Bahrām Gur himself, since in these two stories the word *karg* (referring to the beast that is killed by these heroes) rhymes with the words *targ*, meaning ‘helmet’, *tagarg*, meaning ‘hailstone’, and *marg*, meaning ‘death’.

But things become unclear, as Ettinghausen himself admits, in the corresponding stories of Goshtāsp and Esfandiyār, since the word referring to the kind of beast killed by these two heroes rhymes with *sotorg*, meaning ‘bellicose’, and *bozorg*, meaning ‘big’. So, in these two cases of stories about the killing of monstrous beasts by heroes, the word for the beast must be read as *gorg*, which means ‘wolf’. The word cannot be *karg*, which Ettinghausen translates as ‘unicorn’ or ‘rhinoceros’. In these two cases, we simply cannot read *karg*, since only the word *gorg* rhymes with *sotorg* and *bozorg*, whereas the use of the word *karg* would ruin the rhyme.

Even in the case of Bahrām Gur, where the word for the beast is *karg*, not *gorg*, we find an attestation of the variant *gorg* in a manuscript – as noted in the apparatus of the Moscow edition (VII 422.2076).¹² In this case, it is the variant *gorg* that would ruin the rhyme, and so we may assume that *karg* is the supposedly ‘correct’ reading. Still, the infiltration of the *textual* variant *gorg* here strongly suggests that this alternative word was in fact a legitimate *poetic* variant in other contexts, and I must emphasise that we do see such other contexts attested in the cases I already noted where we read *gorg* rhyming with *sotorg* and *bozorg*.

Even though Ettinghausen thinks that the use of the word *gorg* or ‘wolf’ in the stories about the killing of the ‘unicorn’ by Goshtāsp and Esfandiyār results from a mistaking of a *karg* or ‘rhinoceros’ for a wolf, he recognises that the word *gorg* must be read instead of the word *karg* in these two stories (since the existing rhymes make it a certainty that the word *gorg* is being used, not *karg*). That is why Ettinghausen thinks of the poetic word *karg* as ‘ambiguous’ in referring to ‘rhinoceros’, whereas the word *karkadan* in classical Persian prose is not ambiguous, because it refers only to a ‘rhinoceros’, not to a wolf.¹³

Parallelisms in the Variations of Verbal Art and Visual Art

As we can see from the variations in both the poetry and the iconography of the *Shahnameh*, when it comes to representing a monstrous beast killed by four

different royal heroes, both the verbal and the visual arts of the *Shahnameh* show that this beast can have the body of a wolf just as readily as it can have the body of other animals. The different bodies in the various versions of the myth are variants that are typical of myth, which is a medium that accommodates variation. When the variants point to similarities with real as well as imaginary animals, the word for any real animal, like *gorg* for ‘wolf’, may refer to the imaginary animal just as readily as a word for an animal that is only imaginary, like *karg* for ‘unicorn’ – or we can even say ‘rhinoceros’ here, as Ettinghausen does, though this *karg* as a rhinoceros would of course be a *mythical* rhinoceros, not a *real* one, just as the *gorg* would be a *mythical* wolf, not a *real* one. That is why the mythical unicorn of the *Shahnameh* can be called a *gorg* (‘wolf’) just as readily as it can be called a *karg* (‘unicorn’) – and the unicorn in the *Shahnameh* can be visualised as a wolf precisely because this mythical unicorn can look like a monstrous animal with the body of a wolf just as readily as it can look like a monstrous animal with the body of a lion, an antelope, or whatever other creature.



Fig. 6.3. Eskandar killing a kargadan, Ilkhanid period, before 1335. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

We have already seen a case in which the mythical animal looks like an antelope. Figure 6.3 depicts a case in which the same animal looks more like a lion. In this miniature, showing a picture of Eskandar killing a ‘unicorn’ or ‘rhinoceros’, which looks like a lion with a single horn, we are dealing with the same manuscript, the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*, which, as we have seen, contains a miniature showing a picture of Bahrām Gur killing a ‘unicorn’ or ‘rhinoceros’ that looks like a wolf with a single horn. With reference to this particular picture of a *karg*, Ettinghausen observes: ‘Another proof that the animal was understood as a rhinoceros is the caption of the ... miniature [Plate Number 9], which does not use the ambiguous term *karg* but *karkadan*.’¹⁴

But I must stress that there are unambiguous cases in which we see a *karg* that looks like a wolf, having no horn at all. For example, here is an illustration featuring Esfandiyār in the act of killing four ‘*karg* monsters’, as Ettinghausen describes them in his caption. Looking at the illustration, we can find no horn on any of the four beasts, which correspond to two such beasts featured in the corresponding text (Figure 6.4).



Fig. 6.4. Esfandiyār killing *karg* monsters, line drawing, produced by Jill Robbins, of Plate 28 in the monograph of Richard Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn* (1950).

In another miniature depicting the same scene in the *Shahnameh*, we see not four but two wolf-like beasts being slain by Esfandiyyār – and this number corresponds to the number that we read in the text of the corresponding poetry (Figure 6.5).¹⁵



Fig. 6.5. Esfandiyyār killing two *karg* monsters, line drawing, produced by Jill Robbins, of Plate 23 in the monograph of Richard Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn* (1950).

In the poetry of the *Shahnameh*, one of the royal heroes who kills a ‘unicorn’, Goshtāsp himself, expresses his astonishment that humans are foolish enough to give the name of *gorg* (‘wolf’) to this monster that he fights and kills. The hero’s own word for referring to this monster is *azhdahā* (‘dragon’):¹⁶

I call this beast a dragon [*azhdahā*] and not a wolf [*gorg*]. You don't know a wolf [*gorg*] from a gigantic dromedary. (VI 29.356) ... if this powerful dragon [*azhdahā*] comes upon me, which men who are deprived of their senses call a wolf [*gorg*] ... (VI 31.380)

I show here two miniatures illustrating the killing of this monster by Goshtāsp, and we see in both cases that the illustrator goes out of his way to highlight features that are decidedly not wolf-like (Figures 6.6, 6.7).



Fig. 6.6. Goshtāsp killing a wolf. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Creative Commons.

But the fact remains that the poetry of the whole episode that corresponds to these pictures of Garshāsp killing a *karg* guarantees, by way of its rhyming patterns, that the word for the monster in this episode is not *karg* but *gorg*, which unambiguously means ‘wolf’.

I propose, then, that the poetry here is commenting, by way of the hero's own wording, on the fact that the mythical animal killed by the royal hero can be visualised as a ‘real’ animal (‘wolf’), and not only as a ‘mythical’ animal

(‘unicorn’). The hero is speaking disparagingly about a disconnect between the ‘mythical’ and the ‘real’ in the minds of humans, who insist on visualising a mythical animal as if it could only be a real animal, such as a wolf.



Fig. 6.7. Goshtāsp killing a karg. *Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.*

Animals Both ‘Magical’ and Real

For a hero in the world of myth, such as Goshtāsp as we hear him speaking about unicorns and wolves, a mythical animal is of course just as real as a real animal, and you must not make the mistake of failing to visualise the mythical animal. For a non-hero in the world of reality, however, a mythical animal cannot possibly exist, and it is a mistake to visualise it. The various parts of the mythical animal that we see in pictures cannot be put together in such a way that they could all fit the wholeness of a real animal, which is made up of different parts that do in fact fit together.

Here we see the crux of the argument between Homer Simpson and his daughter Lisa in an episode of *The Simpsons* from 1995, 'Lisa the Vegetarian':

Homer: Are you saying you're never going to eat any animal again?

What about bacon?

Lisa: No.

Homer: Ham?

Lisa: No.

Homer: Pork chops?

Lisa: Dad, those all come from the same animal.

Homer: Heh heh heh. Ooh, yeah, right, Lisa. A wonderful, magical animal.¹⁷

I propose a comparable interpretation of Persian stories about hunting for different kinds of animals like wolves and antelopes and lions: for those who loved to consume such wonderful stories, a story about a composite of all these animals would be all the more wonderful. Such a composite beast would be truly 'a wonderful, magical animal'.

I end here with a reflection on what I said I would argue at the beginning of the chapter. I said that the application of a diachronic perspective in the process of analysing textual variants makes it possible to reconstruct earlier phases of systems that generate the variations found in existing texts. Similarly, in the case of illustrations, I argue that a diachronic perspective in analysing the iconographical variants we find in the Great Mongol *Shahnameh* and in other such sources is needed to reconstruct *an underlying system of visual narratology that generates the existing iconographic variants*.

In terms of my argument, the heroic king Garshāsp is correct when Ferdowsi represents him as remarking, ruefully, that those listeners to the *Shahnameh* who are not tuned into the world of mythmaking about the hunting of monstrous beasts by heroic kings will assume, wrongly, that these beasts must be visualised as real animals. By contrast, the heroic king is indeed tuned into the world of mythmaking, both in words and in pictures, and that is why he knows for sure that you cannot visualise such beasts as real animals. Each picturing of these animals is only a part of a bigger picture that defies any single description. And that bigger picture is all about 'one wonderful magical animal'.

If both Homer and Lisa Simpson could only switch from the world of reality as they see it to the world of myth as seen through the 'magical' lens of the *Shahnameh* – and I include here both the words and the illustrations – they would both learn the truth of what Garshāsp is saying: you cannot imagine a wondrous beast as the same thing as any one single real animal. That kind of oneness can only happen in the alternative reality of mythmaking, as exemplified by the sophisticated verbal and visual arts of the *Shahnameh*.¹⁸

Notes:

1. R. Hillenbrand, 'New Perspectives in Shahnama Iconography', in R. Hillenbrand, ed., *Shahnama: The Visual Language of the Persian Book of Kings. Varie, Occasional Papers 2* (Burlington, VT, 2004), p. 1.
2. Ibid., pp. 1–2.
3. For historical background on this book, see the definitive studies in Hillenbrand, *Shahnama*: S. S. Blair, 'Rewriting the History of the Great Mongol *Shahnama*'; and J. M. Bloom, 'The Great Mongol *Shahnama* in the Qajar Period'.
4. For an approach that differs from mine, see A. Soudavar, 'The Sage of Abu-Sa'id Bahador Khan: The Abu-Sa'idname', in J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert, eds, *The Court of the Il-Khans, 1290–1340, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 12* (1996), which argues that virtually all the illustrations in the Great Mongol *Shahnameh* refer to specific events in Ilkhanid history, and that the manuscript should be called the Abu-Sa'idnameh. He does not consider the iconographic theme that I will be analysing here, perhaps because he did not find it to have contemporary relevance.
5. M. S. Simpson, 'Shahnama as Text and Shahnama as Image', in Hillenbrand, *Shahnama*, p. 12.
6. O. M. Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*, 3rd edn. (Cambridge, MA, 2013) and *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetics*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA, 2013).
7. Simpson, 'Shahnama as Text', p. 11.
8. F. de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, critical edn, ed. T. de Mauro (Paris, 1972 [1916]), p. 117.
9. My starting point is the miniature illustration numbered 53 in O. Grabar and S. Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago/London, 1980) – a most useful catalogue of the miniatures surviving from the Great Mongol *Shahnameh*. The corresponding text in the *Shahnameh* can be found in Y. E. Bertels, ed., *Ferdowsi: Shāhnāma I–IX* (Moscow, 1960–71), vol. VII, p. 123. Here and elsewhere, I should note, I will use this Moscow edition as the primary point of reference in citing lines of poetry from the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi, though I will also cite, at one point, the newer edition: D. Khaleghi-Motlagh, ed., Abu'l-Qasem Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh (Book of Kings)* (New York, 1988 and following).
10. Grabar and Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History*, p. 162.
11. R. Ettinghausen, *Studies in Muslim Iconography I: The Unicorn*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers 1: 3 (Publication 3993) (Washington, DC, 1950), pp. 37–8. See also T. Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, 2nd edn (Berlin/Leipzig, 1920), p. 47.
12. This variant is not mentioned in the apparatus of Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Shahnameh*, vol. 6, p. 572.
13. Ettinghausen, *Studies in Muslim Iconography*, p. 38.
14. Ibid., p. 38n11.
15. Shreve Simpson found for me a good colour image of the illustration: the reproduction I am using is from Eleanor Sims, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources* (New Haven, CT, 2002).
16. Ettinghausen, *Studies in Muslim Iconography*, p. 38.
17. 'Lisa the Vegetarian', written by David S. Cohen, directed by Mark Kirkland; originally aired 15 October 1995 (available on youtube.com as 'Simpsons Magical Animal').
18. In closing, I would like to record my deep gratitude to Shreve Simpson for her generosity in giving me her sound advice as I was putting this chapter together.

The Mausoleum of Oljeitu and the Citadel of Sultaniyya

Marco Giovanni Brambilla
(MGBDomus)

The mausoleum of Oljeitu (1304–16) and the citadel of Sultaniyya are among the most important monuments of Islamic architecture. However, they remain essentially unknown. Only a small group of specialised scholars are familiar with even generalities about the mausoleum. As the monument is enormously complicated, and presents myriad unsolved mysteries, a clear final vision¹ of its history has so far proved elusive (Figures 7.1 and 7.2).



Fig. 7.1. General view of the Mausoleum in 2015. Photo by author.

The city and the citadel of Sultaniyya remain virtually unexplored.² Sultaniyya is impressive in its own right, and even more so within the context of a much larger construction programme, implemented within barely twenty-five years. In fact, 80 per cent of all Ilkhanid monuments were built between 1295 and 1320, including the three mega-scale structures: the tomb of



Fig. 7.2. Aerial photo of the citadel. Part of the exhibition in the Mausoleum. Original photographer unknown.

Ghazan Khan (1295–1304), the mausoleum of Oljeitu and the mosque of Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alīshāh.³ This massive burst of building activity did not occur by chance. The principal individual behind this construction activity was Ghazan Khan. His vision and far-reaching reforms ultimately provided the framework for an aggressive legal, cultural and ethical system, which revolutionised the entire construction industry. His efforts cannot be understated. With Ghazan, even the semblance of an Ilkhanid Iran subordinate to the Mongol Empire can be dismissed.⁴ Under Ghazan, it was now a purely Iranian cultural milieu.

However, on or about 1245, Ghazan was implementing the initial goals envisioned by the Mongol hierarchy – namely, the creation of a far-reaching Mongol dominion that could provide peace, safe commercial activity and prosperity from the Pacific to the Mediterranean. The task of securing the western frontiers of the Mongol Empire was entrusted to Hülegü (1256–65), who entered Iran with an army of over 100,000 soldiers. But Hülegü’s Iran campaign was not about conquering Iranian territories. Iran already belonged to the Mongols, and there was no single military power capable of resisting them.⁵ Furthermore, two of the three stated goals of Hülegü’s march towards the west are irrelevant to a military expedition. Eliminating the Ismailis and subduing the rebellious tribes of Western Iran were not worth a military expedition of this extent.

The third objective – the submission of the Caliphate – is often misunderstood. Hülegü was not instructed to destroy Baghdad. Rather, his task was to ensure that the caliph would accept the supremacy of the Mongol khan,

in which case he was to be treated like a brother. Of course, kinship came at a price, since the Caliphate would then become a de facto vassal state of the Mongol Empire. To this end, Hülegü tried diplomatically to convince the caliph to accept his supremacy, without all-out war. The negotiations failed: Baghdad was attacked and destroyed within the space of a month, and the Ilkhanid Empire was established.

After the fall of Baghdad in 1258, Hülegü immediately initiated the reconstruction of the city. He also built several palaces and settlements in Iran, including the palace and treasury on Shāhi Island, and began the extremely challenging and expensive project of constructing the Maragheh observatory.

Long before arriving at the gates of Baghdad, Hülegü had already started to rebuild his empire.⁶ Hülegü rebuilt Quchan, including the main irrigation *qanāts* essential for the long-term prosperity of the area, even before he executed any strategic military activity. Moreover, he initiated the creation of a new administration for his empire in the making.⁷ By definition, empires must manage diversity, and the goals of the minority leadership must be realised by the experience and expertise of their subordinated subjects. It is therefore unsurprising that the newly created administrative structure was essentially Iranian, and it clearly influenced all cultural spheres of the Ilkhanid Empire, including the construction industry.

The introduction of monumental mausoleums and the town planning aspect of Sultaniyya are characteristic of this new cultural milieu within the Islamic Ilkhanid Empire. Arghūn (1284–91), the fourth ruler of the dynasty, founded a new town at Sultaniyya, with a perimeter of 12,000 *gam* ('paces') and a central citadel. When Arghūn's son, the eighth Ilkhanid ruler, Oljeitu (1304–16) decided to transform the site of Sultaniyya into a new imperial city, he undertook one of the largest construction projects of all time. Not only did Oljeitu extend the limits of the city to 30,000 paces, he made it the royal capital and the most important city of his empire.

For all practical purposes, this did not make sense. Tabriz was already a major metropolitan city, with a perimeter of 25,000 paces and a large number of impressive buildings, including those built by Ghazan Khan and Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl-allāh Hamadānī. It provided all the extensive infrastructure and amenities necessary for a major city of the time, and was a critical financial and trading centre on the east to west Silk Road. The location of Sultaniyya had only one primary advantage: it provided immense pastures, water, forests and abundant game for the large Mongol army.

Arghūn founded a city at the location that would become Sultaniyya, not as the royal capital of the empire, but mainly as a satellite city and supporting military base. Arghūn's decision to create a city at that location was a practical one. Oljeitu decided to enlarge Sultaniyya, and to make it the seat of the empire, in order to create a legacy. According to Al-Qashani, Sultaniyya had a population of 100,000 and all the amenities of a royal city.⁸

Today, only the central citadel and Oljeitu's mausoleum survive. The magnificent and impressive congregational mosque, just outside the walls of the citadel, was destroyed by an earthquake in 1880. Tepe Nur, a dodecagonal mausoleum to the south of the citadel, stands at a height of only 12 feet.⁹ The perimeter of the central citadel has been excavated. Its rectangular form and defensive towers are clearly visible. It is almost a perfect square, with dimensions of 295×310 metres, and has sixteen towers and two gates. The central citadel is perfectly oriented towards the cardinal points of the compass, as is typical in Chinese and Mongol tradition (Figure 7.3). Its two gates are located in the centre of the north and south walls respectively. Both are oriented towards the east, and are perfectly aligned along a north-south axis, although we cannot be certain that a continuous corridor interconnected them. Both gates provided access to the citadel, through a short corridor at a 90 degree angle, essentially making a direct approach impossible. The gates are similar in type and dimension, but not in function. The north gate is often mentioned in the chronicles, whereas the south gate is only mentioned on rare occasions.¹⁰

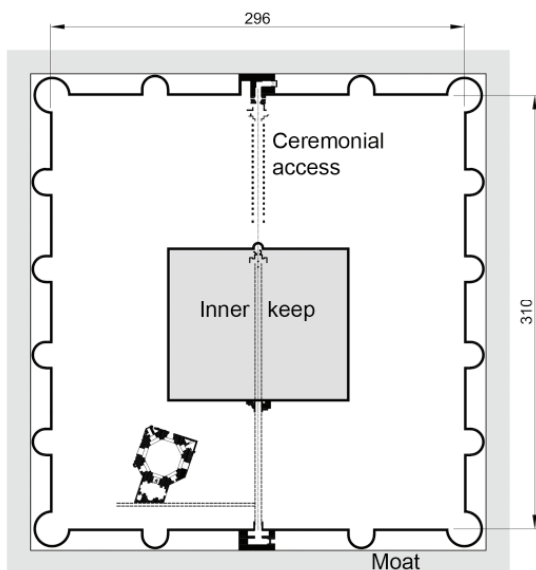


Fig. 7.3. The citadel of Sultaniyya, drawing by author, 2016.

The north gate is the official monumental gateway to the citadel. According to the traveller Ker Porter, writing in 1821,¹¹ this gate once bore inscriptions and architectural decorations, which have since disappeared.

The fact that the main access to the citadel is from the north may constitute the first break with Chinese and Mongol tradition, in which the main access is always from the south. Access to the citadel from the north gate is via two steps

and a doorway. After a short path, there is a 90 degree turn in the direction of the centre of the citadel. At the corner, there is a bench carved in stone. Once the path has turned the corner, it is perfectly aligned along a north–south axis and becomes a formal corridor. At the very beginning of the corridor, there is an octagonal space, a typical Persian *hashti* (‘anteroom’). On crossing this first space, one enters a rectangular, or probably a cruciform room, which leads to an arched colonnade. This is definitely a ceremonial passageway.

The formal corridor terminates in an open space in front of a massive interior tower with continuous protective walls. The base of the tower, built of green sandstone, is about 2.2 metres above the level of the corridor. This clearly indicates that the corridor ended at this point: in order to access the inner portion of the citadel, doorways must have been opened within the walls at some other location.

There is no published record of the archaeological excavations. However, apparently the walls continued to east and west, forming an inner enclosure of about 130 × 110 meters, encircled by a narrow pathway.¹²

There might well have been an entranceway to this inner sanctum, along the north–south axis, at a point south of this inner enclosure, where the remains of massive foundations are still visible today. The fact that the entrance to this inner protected area was from the south, adjacent to the mausoleum itself, is consistent with Mongol tradition. It would also indicate that this was a more restricted area, most probably used to house Oljeitu’s harem, his private palace and other non-public structures.

The function of the south gate was totally different. It has almost the same configuration and same dimensions, but the approach is more practical and less formal. On entering this gate, there is another 90 degree turn, leading to a corridor. But, in this case, the passage is not monumental at all; it is merely practical, at best.

On entering the corridor, there are several rooms on each side of the path – clearly utility or service areas. Unfortunately, the archaeological excavations did not follow a clear pattern, and much remains to be discovered. What is certain at this stage is that there was a clear difference in the purpose of the two gates. The north gate was the official, ceremonial entrance to the citadel, while the south gate could have been either a private entranceway for royalty, or a service access gate. Perhaps that is why there is no mention of the south gate in historical texts.¹³

The citadel was also protected by a moat. This appears to have been some 14 metres away from the walls and about 17 metres wide. No information is available about its depth, although, typically, similar moats would be 5–7 metres deep. The moat could be crossed by means of a pontoon bridge in front of the north gate.

The height of the perimeter wall has been estimated at 10–11 metres, with a width of 4 metres. The corner towers of the rectangular form are slightly larger

in diameter than all the other towers. Two *qanāts*, traces of which are still visible, provided the citadel with water.

There are several descriptions of what used to be within the confines of the citadel, although their locations can only be verified by further archaeological excavations. The discovery of an inner protected area, within the rather small citadel, is of considerable importance and will probably be the subject of future studies.

Of all the structures within the citadel, only the mausoleum still stands. While the citadel is clearly located at the cardinal points of the compass, the mausoleum of Oljeitu is oriented on a north-east–south-west axis and the south-west wall faces the direction of qibla. At some point, the oratory was added along this wall.

The main structure is based on an octagonal plan, with a diameter of 24.5 metres. Eight massive piers support the impressive double shell dome to a height of 50 metres (Figure 7.4). The interior space is divided into eight bays at ground level and eight loggias on the second level (Figure 7.5). There are eight galleries facing the outside, on a higher level, and, on the terrace level, there is a passageway around the base of the dome, with eight minarets at the corners of the octagon (Figures 7.6–7.9).

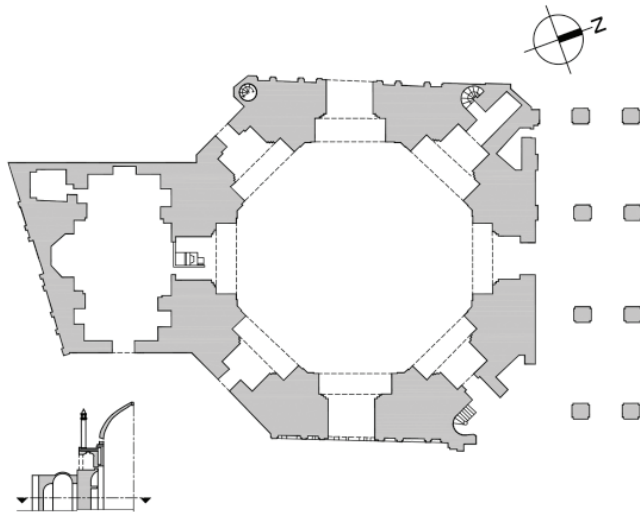


Fig. 7.4. The ground floor of the Mausoleum, drawing by author 2016.

The entire interior space of the mausoleum is fully decorated. In the first phase, it was decorated with brick and glazed tiles, and, in the second phase, with stucco, painted over with decorations and inscriptions.¹⁴

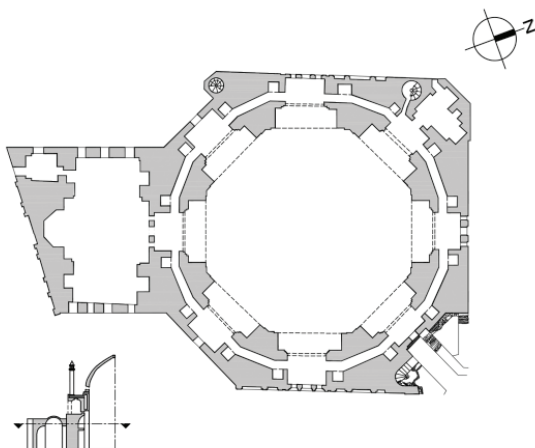


Fig. 7.5. The Loggia level of the Mausoleum, drawing by author 2016.

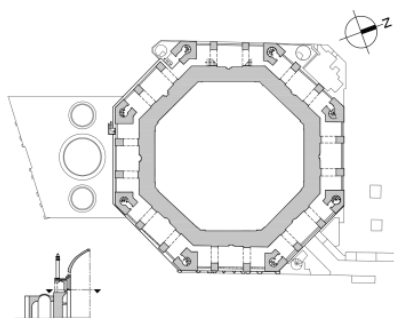


Fig. 7.6. The Gallery level of the Mausoleum, drawing by author 2016.

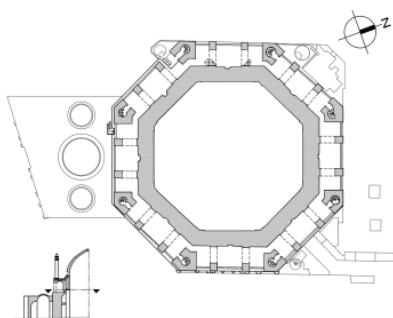


Fig. 7.7. The Terrace level of the Mausoleum, drawing by author 2016.

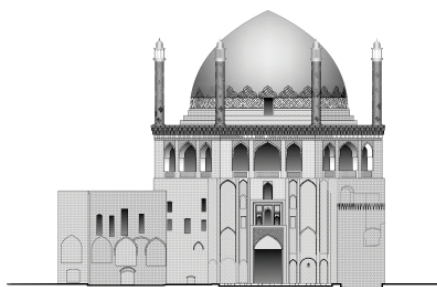


Fig. 7.8. The East elevation, drawing by author, 2016.

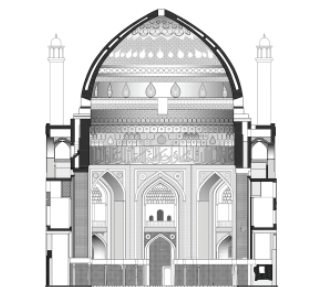


Fig. 7.9. The East / West section, drawing by author, 2016.

The construction techniques employed were surprisingly intricate. This huge monument rests on only a small foundation of hewn sandstone, with a compacted soil base (Figure 7.10). The eight piers are solid only at the level of the first floor bays. At the level of the loggias, they have been carved through, creating a series of small rooms and corridors, which interconnect the loggias. At the gallery level, facing the outside, the passageway is larger and the piers smaller. At the terrace level, not much remains of the original piers, which terminated in slender minarets and a passageway around the base of the dome.

The dome itself rests on a series of arches in an ingenious manner. A complicated system of arches transfers the vertical load of the dome onto the lowest level of the piers (Figure 7.11). All the walls are simple enclosures, and the structure consists of an intricate system of arches, designed to be as light as possible. In fact, wherever possible, rooms and empty spaces have been carved out from the main mass of the building, in order to reduce unnecessary bulk and weight, and to make the entire building as light as possible.

The double shell dome is unique, as it is a true double shell construction of massive proportions. It is wider at its base than at its apex. It curves elegantly, forming an almost egg-shaped dome (the ideal geometrical profile), which allows for minimal lateral forces, and an easy transfer of vertical loads to the supporting system of load-bearing arches. The two shells are interconnected by a series of blind arches.

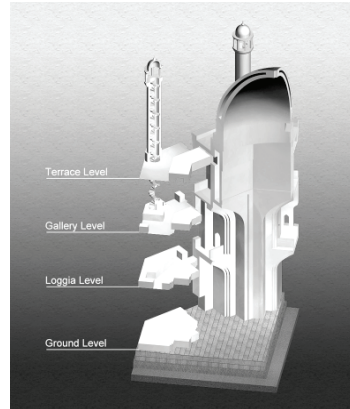


Fig. 7.10. The structural load bearing system of the piers, drawing by author, 2016.

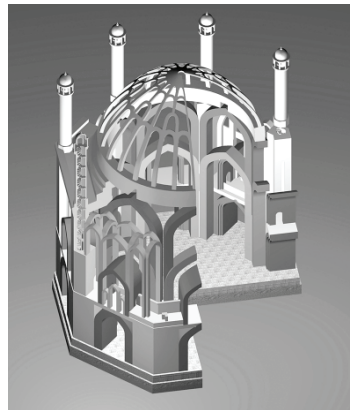


Fig. 7.11. The structural load bearing system of arches, drawing by author, 2016.

At the south-west corner, there is an oratory, a space added to the structure as it was being completed. Interestingly, the south-west wall of the oratory is not parallel to the south-west wall of the mausoleum proper, but aligned in an odd way, parallel to the southern wall of the citadel. When and why the oratory was built is still the subject of discussion.

Beneath the oratory are the burial chambers, which were surveyed in 2013.¹⁵ A recent excavation also shows traces of the foundations of the mausoleum, which are connected to the foundations of the oratory in one location, and independent of them in another.

Current information suggests that there was a smaller original structure attached to the south-west wall of the mausoleum and perfectly aligned with the south-west wall of the main building. It is of critical importance to note that the mausoleum was oriented in the direction of Mecca from its conception. The south-west wall of the mausoleum and any rooms attached to it were therefore always oriented in the direction of qibla. The floor plan of the crypt area, as well as the archaeological evidence, suggest that a room probably already existed at this location when the idea of the mausoleum was conceived. This room might have been only as large as the central area of the crypt, or may have extended out as far as the perimeter walls of the lower crypt area.

The oratory was altered, and its southern wall dramatically rebuilt, at some point during the various construction phases of the mausoleum (Figure 7.12).

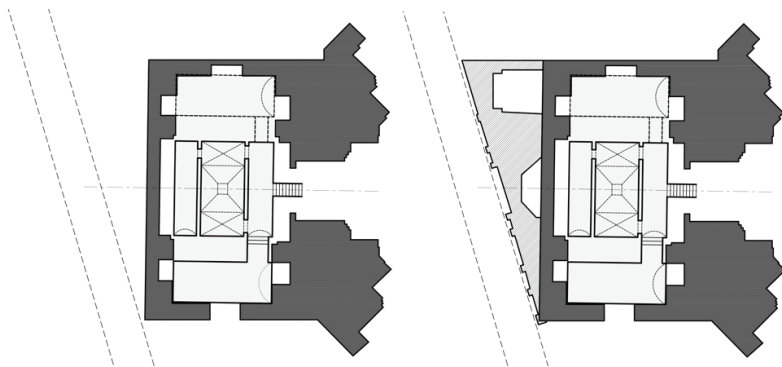


Fig. 7.12. The oratory before and after the changes, drawing by author, 2016.

The well-documented power struggle between Oljeitu's two viziers – Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl-allāh Hamadānī and Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh – eventually ended, with Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh the victor. From that point onwards, Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh implemented a series of changes to the mausoleum, literally attempting to obliterate the legacy of Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl-allāh Hamadānī, and supplant it with his own.

The small oratory to the south-west was replaced by a majestic mihrab room, but, at its southwest extremity, there was an existing pathway, running east to west, parallel to the citadel wall. The new south-west wall of the oratory therefore had to follow the contours of this road, which created a slight anomaly in this otherwise perfectly geometrical structure.

Furthermore, this is the only wall of the oratory that is adorned by a series of blind arches, and does not have any structures directly attached to it. By contrast, there are clear indications that both the eastern and western walls of the oratory had other structures attached to them (Figure 7.13).



Fig. 7.13. The South/West wall of the oratory, photo by author, 2015.

Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alīshāh’s interventions are also visible in the interior of the dome, where the original brick and glazed tile decorations have been covered with stucco and painted over. In all eight loggias, inscriptions alluding to Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl-allāh Hamadān have been scratched out and replaced by the name Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alīshāh (Figure 7.14).

Interestingly, while historical texts provide a wealth of information about the life of Oljeitu and the city of Sultaniyya, there are no references to the various changes that occurred during the construction of the mausoleum itself or of the citadel. It is therefore of the utmost importance to pursue the physical and archaeological evidence, as the only way of reaching a more complete understanding of this unique and magnificent Ilkhanid city and the structure it contained.



Fig. 7.14. The first and the second phase of the interior of the mausoleum, photos by author, 2015.

Notes:

1. For a list of recent essays on Sultaniyya, see sultaniyya.org.
2. For a brief description of the excavation of the citadel, see M. Mahryar, A. Kabiri and F. Towhidi, 'Barresi ba peygardi moqadamati dar borj va baruyeh arg-e shahr-e qadim-e Soltanieh', *Asar*, 12, 13, 14 (Payk, Iran: Organization for the Protection of Historical Monuments, 1365/1986).
3. D. Wilber, *The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Il-Khanid Period* (New York: Greenwood, 1969), pp. 100–4.
4. See Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl-allāh Hamadānī, *Geschichte Gazan-Han's aus dem Ta'rih-i Mubarak-i-Gazani*, ed. K. Jahn (London: Luzac, 1940), in Persian, pp. 201–7. In over 200 pages, and forty *hekayats*, Rashīd al-Dīn describes Ghazan Khan's reforms. Although there may be some exaggeration to Rashīd al-Dīn's portrayal of Ghazan Khan as an all-knowing renaissance man, there can be no doubt that Ghazan was a talented individual of many interests, who saved the empire and implemented considerable reforms. Some of his large-scale changes resulted in the resurrection of the Ilkhanid Empire. *Hekayat* 12 specifies in detail the reorganisation of the construction industry, and the creation of a system that succeeded both in erecting major monuments and in improving construction quality throughout the empire.
5. See Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl-allāh Hamadānī, *Jami-al-Tawarikh*, vol. 2, ed. B. Karimi (Tehran: Eghbal, 1959) pp. 685–7. Upon his accession as khan, Möngke began to organise the affairs of the empire: planning future wars and lands to be conquered, and dividing the empire among his family. He sent his brother Qubilai east, to China, and his other brother Hülegü west, to Iran and Iraq. Möngke instructed Hülegü to eliminate the Ismailis and the various rebellious tribes of western Iran and to subjugate the Caliphate of Baghdad. He emphasised that, in all his decisions, he must consult with his Christian wife, Doghuz Khatun, and pay attention to her advice. Several groups of soldiers and engineers preceded Hülegü, to prepare for the arrival of his massive army of 120,000 and of the royal entourage. Roads were repaired, temporary bridges erected and food supplies stored.
6. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami-al-Tawarikh*, p. 734. Hülegü is the first Il Khan to be mentioned as an *imarat dust* ('builder'), who encouraged new development and construction. For an overview of the construction activities by Hülegü and his successors prior to Ghazan Khan, see A. U. Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, eds, *A Survey of Persian Art, vol. III, Islamic Architecture* (Tokyo: Teiji Shobo, 1977), pp. 1,047ff.
7. See Hamdallah Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, ed. D. Siyaqi (Tehran: Tahur, 1378/1999), p. 158 and Al-Qashani, *Tarikh-i Uljaytu*, ed. M. Hanbali (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjumeh va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1348/1969) p. 104.
8. Al-Qashani, *Tarikh-i Uljaytu*, pp. 46–7.
9. Marco Brambilla, 'Tepe Nur, an unknown Ilkhanid monument in Sultāniyya', (Penn Museum: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). For the most recent discourse about this monument, see www.sas.upenn.edu/arhistory/events/against-gravity-building-practices-pre-industrial-world.
10. Hāfez-e Abru, *Dayl-e Jāme 'al-tawārikh-e rašidi*, ed. K. Bayāni (Tehran: Chap Taban, 1350/1971) p. 69. Escaping from Abū Sa'īd, Dameshgh leaves from the smaller, southern gate of Sultaniyya, with ten other people.
11. R. K. Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia* (London Longman, Hurst Rees, Orme & Brown, 1821), vol. I p. 278.
12. I surveyed the visible portion of this wall in 2013. Further detailed information regarding the covered portions of this enclosure was kindly provided to the author in 2014, during a meeting with Mr Abbasian, the archaeologist in charge of this portion of the excavations.

13. Rashīd al-Dīn, for example, only mentions the north gate, although he was intimately involved with the entire construction activity in Sultaniyya, where he built a residential quarter for 1,000 people.
14. See E. Sims, 'The Iconography of the Internal Decoration in the Mausoleum of Uljaytu in Sultāniyya', P. Soucek, ed., *Contents and Context in Visual Arts in the Islamic World* (University Park, PA and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), and S. Blaire, 'The Epigraphic Program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultānniyya: Meaning in Mongol Architecture', in Ernst G. Gruber and Eleanor G. Sims, eds, *Islamic Art: An Annual Dedicated to the Art and Culture of the Muslim World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). For the interior decorations, see E. Sims, 'The Iconography of the Internal Decoration in the Mausoleum of Uljaytu in Sultāniyya' and, for the epigraphic descriptions, see S. Blair 'The Epigraphic Program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultānniyya'. The second phase of the decoration affected only the areas below the dome. The interior space of the dome had already been decorated and painted, with decorated plaster, which included a large number of prefabricated decorative elements and bands. When the builders decided to cover the brick and glazed tile decoration in the interior, there was no need to change anything beneath the dome, as that part of the building already had decoration consistent with the type implemented in the second phase. Furthermore, this area would not have been accessible to workers, since the scaffolding was cut down and removed as the workers completed each stage of their work, beginning with the apex of the dome and working downwards towards its base. The reason for such an extensive change in the interior decoration is still much debated; however, it seems likely that, at this point, Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh had assumed the role of overseer of the project. Moreover, it is probable that the many changes in the mausoleum occurred due to his direct intervention, especially during the early years of Abū Sa'īd's reign.
15. I surveyed this area twice, in 2013 and 2014, in collaboration with Mr Amirhossein Younessi, Mr Abbas Kashani and Ms. Parvaneh Askari.

The Marāgheh School and Its Impact on Post-Mongol Science in the Islamic World

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Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–74) is one of those figures in the history of science and philosophy in Islam whose life and work have been relatively well studied.¹ His biography and bibliography are available in various sources, and his impact on science after the Mongol conquest, as well as philosophy and *kalām* (Islamic theology), have been the topic of several studies. However, to discuss his impact on the revival and continuation of scientific activities – especially mathematics and astronomy – in the post-Mongol era in Persia and neighbouring states, it is necessary to review the highlights of his life, and then discuss his achievements during its various phases.

Tusi's life can be divided into three distinct periods, shaped by political and social events in Persia during the thirteenth century. The first period, which spans about thirty years of Tusi's life, covers his early education and travels. Tusi was born in 1201 in Tus, a city in Khorasan close to today's Mashhad in north-east Iran, and received his early education from his father and local scholars. After about fifteen years, he moved to Nishapur to study philosophy and medicine. Before Chinggis Khan's invasion of Nishapur in 1221, he travelled to Rey, Baghdad and Mosul, where he received further education in philosophy, *kalām*, and astronomy for about ten years. The first three decades of Tusi's life coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in the history of the Islamic lands, especially of Khorasan. The political unrest after the fall of the Seljuqs (1194), the rise of the Khawarazmian dynasty (which was associated with back-to-back local wars), the Mongol invasion of 1218, and, later, the lack of order due to the Mongols' inability to administer conquered cities, all mark the history of Persia in the last years of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. Although we do not know of any major writing, or other scientific activity such as astronomical observations, accomplished by Tusi in this period, he was famous enough to receive the patronage of Nāsir al-Din 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Abi Mansur, the Ismaili leader (*muhtasham*) of Quhistan, upon his return to Khorasan in or a little after 1227.

The second period of Tusi's life starts from this time, when he joined the Ismailis. Tusi spent about thirteen years with Nāsir al-Din Muhtasham (who was a learned person in his own right); and then, in 1246, he relocated to the central strongholds of Ismailis in Alamut, northern Iran. In this period of about thirty years, Tusi produced the majority of his writings in mathematical sciences, philosophy, and ethics.

Finally, in the third period, the fifty-seven-year-old Tusi joined Hülegü Khan after the fall of Alamut, in 1258, and maintained his position as a respected adviser to the Mongol rulers until the end of his life in 1274. During this time, he managed to establish the Maragheh Observatory, completed the *Ilkhāni Zij* (*zij* is the Persian word for astronomical tables) and wrote his major astronomy text in Arabic, *Tadhkirah fi 'ilm al-hay'a*.

Tusi's impact on science can be divided in three major fields: first, the education and promotion of mathematical sciences; second, observational astronomy; and third, the theoretical treatment of geocentric cosmology, or his critical role in solving the *hay'a* problems.

Tusi and the Teaching of Mathematical Sciences

Tusi's writings on mathematics and astronomy cover a combination of original texts and commentaries, as well as explanatory writings on existing texts, from Euclid's *Elements* to Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and most of the 'Intermediate' or 'Middle Books' (*mutawasittāt*), which traditionally were studied between the *Elements* and the *Almagest*. By producing a collection of user-friendly Arabic and Persian texts in mathematics, Tusi not only promoted their study even in madrasas, but also provided the framework for the curriculum of mathematical studies in post-Mongol Persia. Tusi's mathematical works spread to the eastern parts of the Islamic territories by the fourteenth century, and later, through scholarly exchange between Persian cultural centres (especially the Samarqand Observatory) to the Ottoman madrasas. Tusi had a deep impact on the promotion and education of the mathematical sciences in the newborn Ottoman Empire.²

It is unknown what texts Tusi studied during his student years. However, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the unclearness of the content of a number of mathematical texts in some of his editions.³ We can speculate that, during his stay in the Ismaili courts, having access to their libraries (most probably after he relocated in Alamut), Tusi decided to produce some standard texts in the mathematical sciences by correcting the errors in early translations, adding explanatory comments, and on some occasions introducing his new ideas. Although, in the introduction of his recension of Menelaus's *Spherics*, Tusi talks about his plan to produce revised editions of the Middle Books, the outcome does not match exactly with the tradition of Middle Books. As M'asoumi Hamadāni has shown,⁴ Tusi was not consistent in his recension project: on the one hand, he added texts such as Banu Musā's *Book on the*

Measurement of Plane and Spherical Figures, which was not considered a necessary book to be studied before the *Almagest*; on the other hand, he did not produce a helpful text in algebra, which had found an essential role in mathematical education by Muslim scholars. Nevertheless, Tusi's collection of recensions became the most widespread body of educational texts in the post-Mongol study of mathematics. As evidence, we can point to the number of existing copies of these recensions, as well as numerous commentaries on them, and their translation into Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit as late as the mid-eighteenth century. After the introduction of the printing press in the Islamic states and India, printed versions appeared until the mid-nineteenth century. The popularity of Tusi's versions of mathematical texts was a result not of Tusi's novel ideas and concepts in mathematics, but of his style in recasting the texts that had been translated centuries before. Tusi did not retranslate those texts from their original Greek; however, he rewrote the texts by comparing various translations, correcting the errors, adding explanatory notes, including new methods of calculation or problem-solving, and omitting sections that were not directly connected to the subject. In short, he produced abridged, corrected and updated versions of mathematical texts that made them suitable for educational and practical uses.⁵

Tusi's standing contribution to mathematics can today be found in two fields: trigonometry and non-Euclidean geometry. Although trigonometry had been developed and extensively used by Islamic mathematicians and astronomers by the time of Tusi, it was Tusi who produced a systematic text in plane and spherical trigonometry, introducing it as an independent subject of study. Moreover, Tusi's innovative approach to the proof of Euclid's fifth theorem – the parallel postulate – was translated into Latin in 1594, and, in the early eighteenth century, became the starting-point for Giovanni Sacchari's non-Euclidian geometry.⁶

Tusi and Astronomical Observations

There is no record of Tusi's astronomical or astrological observations before or after joining the Ismailis. Although Tusi composed a number of astronomical and astrological texts during his three decades of service at the Ismaili courts, there is no evidence of his attempt to establish an observatory there, or of his involvement in an observational project. Whether this was due to lack of interest on his part or on that of his patrons is not known. However, Rashid al-Din reports that Möngke Khan (1209–59, r. 1251–59) was aware of Tusi's expertise, and before Hülegü's campaign in Persia asked his brother to send Tusi to Karākūrum in order to build an observatory.⁷ If we trust Rashid al-Din, this report reveals a very important fact about the intellectual and cultural exchanges between (at least) Khorasan and its neighbouring territories. Despite the possible restrictions that Ismailis – especially those living in the strongholds – had in communicating with people outside their community, it seems that

Tusi's astronomical achievements were so significant that news about them spread outside his fortified residence. But what were those achievements? Which books or treatises of Tusi – or news about his other astronomical and astrological activities – reached to Möngke Khan's court?

Most probably, *Risale-ye Mu'iniyya* (ca. 1235), in Persian, is Tusi's first astronomical writing during his stay with the Ismailis. However, Tusi's major writings in the mathematical sciences – such as *Tahrir al-Majisti* and his recensions (all in Arabic) – appeared after 1247, almost five years before Möngke Khan ascended the throne. At least nine of his recensions were completed between 1253 and 1255, when Tusi was in Alamut (today, north-west Iran). Were copies of these books available outside the Ismaili forts in a relatively short time? And, if so, were they taken to Karākūrum?⁸ Were there scholars with fluency in Arabic and expertise in mathematical astronomy involved in figuring out the importance of, for example, *Tahrir al-Majisti* and its author?

Though the Mongols became familiar with Islamic astronomy (mainly Islamic *zijs* and calendars) after the western expedition of Chinggis Khan in the late 1220s, their actual involvement with what for them was 'western astronomy' started much later. During the reign of Güyük Khan – Möngke's predecessor – 'Isā Kelemechi, a West Asian astronomer, entered into the service of the Khan's court. But it was in 1261, during the reign of Qubilai Khan – Möngke's successor – that the Office of Western Astronomy was established, under the supervision of 'Isā.⁹ However, it seems that there was no astronomer in Möngke Khan's court expert in erecting an observatory. According to Rashid al-Din, Möngke Khan himself was an educated person, and was even able to solve a number of Euclid's theorems. To establish an observatory in Karākūrum (the capital of the Mongol Empire in mid-13th century), he asked Jamāl al-Din Muhammad ibn Tāhir ibn Muhammad al-Zaydi al-Bukhārī ('Zhamaliding' in Chinese sources), who was not skilful enough to accomplish the task.¹⁰ And since "Tusi's fame was like the wind blowing all over the face of the earth",¹¹ Möngke asked his brother Hülegü to send Tusi to Karākūrum.

Tusi was well-reputed outside the Ismaili strongholds. However, before his move to Alamut, almost all of his writings (except *Muiniyya* and its short commentary, entitled *Hall-e Mushkelat-e Muiniyya*) were in ethics, logic, theology, philosophy, and so on, rather than the mathematical sciences. How, then, did scholars know about Tusi's mathematical skills? Was it through Tusi's personal communication? Though there is little correspondence between Tusi and other scholars remaining from his Ismaili years, the extent of social exchanges between Ismailis in a fortification like Alamut or Maymuon Dezh with the outside is not very well known. Were Ismaili *du'at* (missionaries), as a part of their missionary tasks, praising scholars in the service of Ismaili rulers and their intellectual achievements? Did Tusi train students in mathematical

sciences who spread his fame? While the details of these exchanges are not known, extant documents show that Tusi, most probably in his Alamut years, had the opportunity to exchange letters with scholars abroad.¹²

Besides his reputation as a philosopher, mathematician and theologian, Tusi was well-known for his astrological knowledge. In addition to his penning a number of books in the field, there are reports of Tusi's astrological advice to both Ismaili and Ilkhanid rulers. He even cast a horoscope for Khurshāh's brother in Lamsar (on 9 April 1235), probably around the same time that he arrived at Alamut.¹³ In *Rawda-yi taslim (Paradise of Submission)*, Tusi – through his esoteric interpretation of astrological signs and celestial arrangements – draws a connection between the will of the Almighty, arrangements in the macrocosm, and human affairs – not only in the formation of the individual human body, but also relating to the date and time when a new law-giver or prophet might arise.¹⁴ This astrological reputation of Tusi, alongside his fame as a philosopher and sage in the service of Ismaili rulers, made him a valuable asset for any administration. For the Mongol rulers, who favoured astrology and practised it extensively, Tusi could be a precious source of astrological advice.

From the lack of any report about astronomical observations during his stay with Ismailis, we have to accept that Tusi's fame in astronomy was mainly due to his writings in the mathematical sciences (and probably his astrological knowledge), rather than the result of any projects in *practical astronomy*. I emphasise this as it has come to my attention that, in some recent publications and online sources, Tusi has been portrayed as a zealous observational astronomer.¹⁵ If Tusi was indeed a dedicated observational astronomer (like Al-Battani or Tycho Brahe), he had numerous chances during the Ismaili years to record his observations of astronomical and astrological events, or measurements of a number of parameters essential in refining earlier observations and models. From 1230 to 1258, at least four brilliant comets were reported by Chinese, European and Japanese observers;¹⁶ more than a dozen partial or total lunar eclipses, as well as a few solar eclipses, were observable in Persia. A good number of other events, such as elongations, conjunctions and retrograde motions, could be subjects of astronomical observations. We know that it was not a common practice among Islamic astronomers to indicate such astronomical and astrological phenomena in their standard books; however, there are plenty of reports about similar occurrences from those astronomers who were involved in specific observational projects. It seems either that Tusi was not one of those observational astronomers, or that we have to accept that the reports that reached Möngke and convinced him of Tusi's observational skills have not come down to us.

As we have seen, Tusi was a practitioner of astrology. But there is a major difference between the nature of astrological observations and those that should be performed before and after the establishment of an observatory. Tusi might

have had the desire to establish an observatory when he was in the Ismaili courts, but he apparently never found the chance to materialise it. The Persian historian of the Mongols Atāmalek Jowaini reports his rescue of a few astronomical instruments, such as astrolabes and armillary spheres, in Alamut.¹⁷ However, except armillary spheres that might have been used in astronomical observations, depending on their sizes, astrolabes would not have had enough accuracy to be used as observatory instruments.

Nevertheless, in *Fawāt al Waḡayāt*, Ibn Shākir states that it was Tusi who convinced Hülegü to build an observatory. According to Ibn Shākir, Hülegü asked Tusi about the benefits of an observatory, and Tusi replied that it would provide information with which to predict future events. Tusi ordered for a washbasin to be dropped from a height, and the resulting clatter caused great fear in Hülegü's camp; but since Hülegü knew about it, he was not frightened.¹⁸ Wassāf also says that, after the fall of Baghdad, Tusi suggested building an observatory to Hülegü.¹⁹ However, it is improbable that Hülegü – coming from a highly 'astrological' culture – was unfamiliar with astrology. We can assume, at the very least, that he knew about the importance of the observatory and astrology from his brother's order to send Tusi to Karākūrum. Before the siege of Baghdad, Hülegü consulted the astrologer Hisām al-Din (who was accompanying Hülegü on the orders of Möngke) about the consequences of invading Baghdad.²⁰ During the fall of Baghdad, Hülegü executed the caliph's astrologer, Suleymanshāh, because – as an astrologer aware of the celestial signs – he was not able to convince his master to surrender.²¹ Finally, it is highly unlikely that Hülegü allocated such an enormous budget to build the observatory just because of Tusi's washbasin experiment.

Rashid al-Din, in *Jamī' al-Tawārikh*, and Tusi in both versions of his introduction to the *Ilkhānī Zīj*, credit the establishment of the Maragheh Observatory to Hülegü. Rashid al-Din portrays Hülegü as a ruler who loved to build, who was interested in philosophy and '*ulum al-awāil*' (ancient sciences, mainly Greek and Hellenistic), who encouraged scholars to debate the ancient sciences, and who, having a great enthusiasm for alchemy, allocated a huge amount of money to the practitioners of this science.²² To build the observatory, he allowed Tusi to receive 10 per cent of the revenue from all endowments in Hülegü's territories, and, according to Shams al-Din 'Urdu (Mu'ayyad al-Din's son), 'only God knows the amount of money that Tusi received from Hülegü to build the observatory'.²³

It is appropriate to raise a few questions about the establishment of the Maragheh Observatory: Was it Hülegü's idea or Tusi's? If it was Hülegü's suggestion, was Tusi practically ready to supervise such a gigantic project? Or did they have similar ideas concerning the need for new observations and meet each other at just the right time? If it was the proposal of either Hülegü or Tusi, and the latter was a proficient observational astronomer well-versed in instrumentation and observation, the resulting tables ought to be mainly based

on new observations. If Tusi was not a proficient observational astronomer, we may imagine a situation in which Hülegü ordered Tusi to build the observatory, and Tusi had to work on the project with a team of experts.

The construction and operation of the Maragheh Observatory, which has been briefly mentioned in primary and secondary sources, needs more investigation in terms of its design, instrumentation and final results. The Maragheh Observatory, in some respects, is a unique institution in the entire history of astronomy. It was the first large-scale observatory in the pre-modern era. It represents a new wave of scientific activities in the Islamic world during the post-Mongol era. It was a gathering place for prominent figures in the development of sophisticated pre-Copernican, non-Ptolemaic planetary theories. And it became the model for other observatories that were built in Persia, Transoxiana and Asia Minor up to the seventeenth century.

Rashid al-Din, reporting the events after the fall of Baghdad in January 1258, says that, in the same year, Hülegü ordered Tusi to lay down the foundation of an observatory in any place he considered appropriate.²⁴ While Tusi was accompanying Hülegü, they reached Maragheh in early August of 1258, and construction of the observatory started almost ten months later, on 6 May 1259 - reasonably after the harsh winter in the area was over.

The idea of erecting such a large-scale, long-lasting observatory, holding many instruments, with space for the staff, books²⁵ and teaching, was new. Nothing we know about the previous observatories in Islam matches the Maragheh Observatory in either magnitude or complexity. The ten-month time window between Hülegü's order and the start of construction of the observatory seems a short period in which to design the observatory and make its instruments. It is unknown whether Tusi already had a plan, or if he had to design the observatory after receiving Hülegü's order. In the introduction of the *Ilkhāni Zij*, Tusi says:

At the time that [Hülegü] seized the dominions of the heretics, I, Nasir al-Din, who am of Tus and had fallen into the power of the heretics; he brought me forth from that place and ordered me to observe the stars. He sought philosophers having knowledge of observation, such as Muayyad al-Din al-'Urdi who was in Damascus, Fakhr al-Din Khilati of Tiflis, Fakhr al-Din Maraghi of Mausil and Najm al-Din Dabiran of Qazvin. They chose Maragheh as the place for the observations to be made, and applied themselves to this task, making instruments and erecting buildings suitable for the purpose. He also ordered them to bring books from Baghdad, Syria, Mosul and Khorasan, and to put them in the place where they would make observations, so that the whole affair went forward in excellent order. The fame of this great work spread throughout the world ... So it was in his mighty reign, in accordance with the instructions of that king, that the observation of the stars was completed. On the basis of these [new] observations I, the

least of slaves Nasir al-Din, made this *Zij-i-Ilkhani*, which I now submit to the service of the Prince of the Worlds Abaqa Qaan, hoping that it may meet with his approval, so that by his auspices astronomers hereafter may deduce their almanacs and ascendants from this *Zij*, and his name remain in the world for thousands of years.²⁶

Nizām al-Din Nishāburi, in his commentary on the *Ilkhāni Zij-e Kashf-i haqā'iq-e Zij-e Ilkhāni* ('Uncovering of the truths of the Ilkhanid astronomical handbook'), which was composed in 1308–09, around thirty-five years after the completion of the *zij*, explains that:

building an observatory is an enormous task, which only kings can accomplish, because there is a need for experts to bring the [design of] instruments from potential to existence, and since in the process of adoption of instruments genuine designs and novel measures might be required, smart people have to be called and only a king can collect those masters from his territories, and bring together all scholars to participate and achieve the best results.²⁷

Actually, all these resources were provided by Hūlegū; as we have seen, a number of experts gathered in Maragheh to build the observatory. The design and construction of the instruments was completed by 1262, and in 1264 Hūlegū, in his visit to Maragheh, insisted on the completion of the observations within the shortest time.²⁸ A year later, Hūlegū died, and finally, in 1272, the *Ilkhāni Zij* – the first Persian *zij* in the Islamic era – was dedicated to Hūlegū's successor Abāqā Khan; Tusi died two years after the *Ilkhāni Zij* was completed.

Nevertheless, it seems that the process of observation and *zij* calculation was not that smooth during the twelve years of Tusi's supervision of the project. In a number of astronomical works that appeared within a relatively short time after the *Ilkhāni Zij*, we find the first criticisms of the *Zij*. In the introduction to his *Kashf-e Haqāiq-e Zij-e Ilkhāni*, Nizām al-Din Nishāburi says implicitly that, since Tusi did not do the final editing of the *Zij*, possible errors might not have been corrected in the published version.²⁹ In his *Ziij al-muḥaqqaq al-sulṭāni 'alā uṣūl al-raṣad al-Ilkhāni* ('The correct *zij* for the Sultan based on the principles of the Ilkhanid observations') Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn 'Alī Khwāja al-Wābkanawī informs us that the *Ilkhāni Zij* is not based just on the observations carried out at the Maragheh Observatory, but rather those at Maghribī's *Zij* as well – which were made based solely on new observations at the observatory, which were more accurate.³⁰ Finally, in *Zij-e jāmi'-e Būsa'idi* (ca. 1438), Rukn al-Din al-Āmulī repeats almost the same criticism of al-Wābkanawī.

Despite the involvement of some renowned scholars and the supervision of Tusi, the accuracy of the *Ilkhāni Zij* was not satisfactory. The basic parameters needed to calculate a new *zij* were not wholly produced by new observations in Maragheh. Those parameters were adopted from previous *zijs*, and were

compared with the observations made at Maragheh.³¹ Though we do not have enough historical evidence, we may speculate that the substandard outcome of the observatory's work may have been the result of several factors. First, Hülegü's rush to complete the *Zij* may have affected the entire process of instrument making, observation and calculation. Second the large size of the observational instruments may have created inaccuracies, which would have been discovered and corrected only gradually. Although large-scale quadrants and other instruments make finer graduations theoretically possible, they can introduce considerable error for practical reasons caused by the magnitude of the construction and the inaccuracy of the large sighting components. In this case, a continuous correction of the acquired data or redesigning of the instruments would be necessary. Third, the scarcity of skilled manpower may have limited the quality and quantity of observations. The available evidence shows that, out of four people that Tusi names as his colleagues in the introduction of the *Ilkhāni Zij* (Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-'Urđi, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Khalāti, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Marāghī and Najm al-Dīn al-Dabirān), only 'Urđi had a background in practical astronomy. The only observational astronomer – who had completed a *zij* before joining Tusi (and his name was not mentioned in the introduction of the *Ilkhāni Zij*) – was Muhyi al-Dīn Maghribi.³² We know that 'Urđi and Fakhr al-Dīn Maraghi died four years before the completion of the *Ilkhāni Zij*, and Maghribi was working independently on his own *zij*, which appeared as *Adwār al-anwār* in 1276.³³ In other words, during the second half of the twelve-year period in which the *Ilkhāni Zij* was produced, Tusi was mainly working with two or three astronomers, and all were in their mid to late sixties.³⁴ During this time, Tusi had other administrative obligations, travelling at least three times to Iraq and once to Quhistan, the latter trip taking more than a year.³⁵

The existence of two observational projects in the Maragheh Observatory is a very interesting issue that requires further investigation: Tusi, with a group of astronomers whose names are indicated in the *Ilkhāni Zij*, was working on one *zij*, and Maghribi – probably with some other colleagues, whose names are not in the *Ilkhāni Zij* – was computing another *zij*, which was finally found to be more accurate than the former. A possible scenario to explain this might be based on the difference between the scientific and utilitarian approaches to accomplishing the project. Maragheh scholars, on the one hand, had to perform observations and calculations, adjust and correct their instruments, and repeat the procedures to reach the highest accuracy, and, on the other hand, had to produce a reasonable set of tables for Hülegü, trying to finish the *Ilkhāni Zij* within a short time (twelve years).³⁶ The first route was later called *Rasad-e Ilkhāni* ('Ilkhanid observations'), or new observations made at Maragheh; and the outcome of the second route was the *Ilkhāni Zij*. The first approach, however, was continued by several other astronomers up until the early fourteenth century. Based on this scenario, we can imagine that Hülegü,

determined to have the best astrological advice, asked Tusi to establish an observatory. Tusi, as a philosopher and theoretical astronomer, tried not only to please the Khan and serve as an intelligent advisor, but also to revive intellectual activities in the dark period of Mongol invasions by erecting the largest observatory ever built, and attracting many brilliant minds.

A close look at Tusi's introduction to the *Ilkhāni Zij* (see above) may also reveal some facts about the establishment of the observatory and the process of *zij* calculation. It clearly says that (emphasis is mine): "Hülegü ordered Tusi to observe the stars; that he (Hülegü) sought scholars who knew observation; they chose Maragheh and applied themselves to this task and the observation of the stars was completed; and on the basis of these new observations, I [Tusi] made this *Ilkhāni Zij*." Depending on the way that we interpret the pronoun they in the original Persian text, Tusi may or may not have participated in selecting Maragheh and performing observations; however, he clearly uses the pronoun I as the only person in charge of the computation of the *zij* based on those new observations. Then Tusi, either as the supervisor or as a part of the observational group, but acting as the chief astronomer, had to use the data gathered to produce the *zij*. But why did he prefer to base the new *zij* upon previous observations? If it was due to Hülegü's hurrying, why did they continue the same procedure after Hülegü's death?

Within almost ten years after the completion of the *Ilkhāni Zij*, all the main astronomers involved in the construction and operation of the observatory were dead. However, the observatory was in operation at least up to the time of Ghazan Khan, in the early years of the fourteenth century. A second generation of astronomers and mathematicians, trained or working in Maragheh, continued the job, mainly to perform new observations, correct the problems of the *Ilkhāni Zij*, or compose a new *zij*. In 1295, Ghazan Khan made Tabriz his capital. Ghazan, a man of science and a designer of astronomical instruments who had visited the Maragheh Observatory and worked with the instruments there, established a new observatory in Tabriz. His chief astronomer, Shams al-Dīn Wābkanawī, who also served as an astronomer for Öljeitü and Abu Sa'īd, made a new *zij*, based on new observations performed in Maragheh and Tabriz. This was the third *zij* written in the Maragheh School, in addition to the *Ilkhāni Zij* and Maghribī's *Adwār al-anwār*. Öljeitü, making Sultaniyya the Ilkhanid capital in 1304, established a new observatory there. Although the remnants of the observatories in Tabriz and Sultaniyya have not yet been discovered, there are explicit reports of their establishment.³⁷

The Maragheh observatory not only initiated intensive astronomical research after a long period of inactivity in observational astronomy in the Islamic world, but also redefined the observatory as an institute. It marked the evolution from the 'one man, one instrument' setting to an institute housing many employees, all of whom needed facilities to perform long-term observations. The Maragheh Observatory also became a model for

observatories built in Transoxiana, Asia Minor and India up to the seventeenth century.

Little is known about observational activities in the period after the death in 1335 of Abu Sa'īd, and the rise of the Timurids in the late fourteenth century. However, in 1424, Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg, who was a mathematician and astronomer, established an observatory in Samarqand. Ulugh Beg had visited the remains of the Maragheh Observatory in his younger years, and his observatory followed the path paved by Maragheh. The main purpose of this new observatory was to produce a *zij* more accurate than the *Ilkhāni Zij*. It was compiled as the *Sultāni Zij*, or *Zij-e Ulugh Beg*, in 1438–39, and became one of the most widespread *zij*s, copied around a hundred times and translated into Arabic and Turkish. Parts of it were translated into Latin, and published in Oxford and London in the mid-seventeenth century. Two very important aspects of the *Sultāni Zij* are its updated values for astronomical parameters and new computational procedures. While in the *Ilkhāni Zij* most of the astronomical parameters, geographic tables and trigonometric tables were taken from earlier *zij*s, Samarqand's astronomers attempted to calculate the tables from scratch, deriving new values for essential parameters.

The Samarqand Observatory, in turn, became a model for an observatory built by Taqī al-Dīn in Istanbul in 1575. After the fall of Ulugh Beg's dynasty in the 1450s, a number of scholars in his circle emigrated to the newborn Ottoman Empire, and had a deep influence on the development of science there.³⁸ Taqī al-Dīn, the court astronomer of Sultan Murād III (r. 1574–95), established an observatory in Istanbul, fulfilling a dream that the Ottoman sultans had had since their conquest of Constantinople in 1453.

Finally, in the Mughal Empire (established by the descendants of Timur in the mid-sixteenth century in north India), the statesman–astronomer Jai Singh, ruler of Jaipur, built five large-scale observatories, between 1724 and 1734, in Jaipur, New Delhi, Varanasi, Ujjain and Mathura. Although these observatories were built after the invention of the telescope, Jai Singh continued the Islamic–Persian tradition of observatory building, greatly inspired by the Samarqand observatory. What makes Jai Singh's designs vitally important is the amalgamation of a long-lasting tradition – starting from the Maragheh Observatory in the mid-thirteenth century and culminating in the Samarqand Observatory in the mid-fifteenth century – with local trends and personal innovations. The Jantar Mantar observatories, forming a great network of observational sites, had a supportive role in the production of the *Zij-e Muhammad Shāhi* (finished c. 1730), one of the last comprehensive astronomical tables of classical astronomy.

The Role of the Maragheh School in the Theoretical Treatment of Geocentric Cosmology; or, the Problem of Hay'a

Zijs were not the only outcome of the Maragheh Observatory. The scientific atmosphere of the observatory represents a turning point in the tradition of reforming Ptolemy's planetary system. Three outstanding scholars of the Maragheh Observatory – Tusi, 'Urđi and Shirāzi – had a pivotal role in developing pre-Copernican, non-Ptolemaic models of celestial motions. Muslim astronomers, from the early years of their acquaintance with Ptolemy's geocentric model, had a special concern to create a clear physical picture of the universe. Based on Aristotle's description of the configuration of the spheres, it was accepted that the earth was located at the centre of the universe, while all celestial bodies were moving uniformly around the central earth. In fact, the celestial region consisted of contiguous spheres, obviously concentric, and each sphere (called an orb) carried the body of a planet, and described equal arcs in equal time intervals. But observational data did not support such uniform motions; from the motion of the sun and the moon to the motion of the planets and stars, there were different short-term or secular non-uniform motions. To accommodate these observations, non-concentric models of planetary motions were developed. According to Ptolemy, the uniform motion of a planet occurred around a point called the equant, which did not coincide with the earth. With this innovation, although observations and the mathematical models of the planetary motions were made compatible, the physical structure of the universe became ambiguous. The problem was simple: If the earth was not the centre of uniform motions, what was the true physical configuration of the celestial spheres? After completing the *Almagest*, Ptolemy wrote another work, now known as the *Planetary Hypotheses*, in which he gave a preliminary answer to this question. This work, preserved in Islam but lost in the Latin West, became the basis for successive improvements in physical accounts of the heavens by Islamic astronomers.³⁹ Doubts concerning Ptolemy – in relation to both his observational data and his description of the cosmos – became a tradition in Islam. The major attempt of this tradition was to create a configuration (*hay'a*) of the universe fulfilling both observational and physical principles. The core problem in this endeavour was that of how to develop models performing uniform motions around the centre of the universe: the earth.

Solving this problem occupied the minds of many astronomers, among them Ibn al-Haytham, Ibn-Sinā's student Abu 'Ubeyd Juzjāni, Ibn Rushd, and Ibn Bājja. But it was Nasir al-Din al-Tusi who developed a revolutionary solution to eliminate the equant. Tusi introduced an arrangement in which the circular motions of two spheres produced a linear motion displacing a point (for example, the centre of an epicycle) closer or further to the central point. This arrangement (called 'Tusi's couple'), which was able to produce non-uniform

motions from concentric uniform motions, was a key concept in the development of later non-Ptolemaic models. Tusi's contemporaries Mu'ayyad al-Din al-'Urđi, and Qutb al-Din Shirāzi also developed innovative non-Ptolemaic models. The tradition was continued by the new models of Ibn al-Shātir (1304–75), the timekeeper of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, and the astronomer Ali Al-Qushji (1403–74), working at the Samarqand Observatory.

We know that Copernicus repeatedly used concepts developed by Tusi and his followers and colleagues. In the *Commentariolus*, Copernicus used techniques of 'Urđi and Ibn al-Shātir to develop his models for planetary longitude. Copernicus's model for the lunar motions is almost the same as the model proposed by Ibn al-Shātir, as is his Mercury model. He also used Tusi's couple to create the variation in the obliquity of the ecliptic, and to produce an oscillation in the orbital planes of planets. In *De revolutionibus*, he employed other techniques from 'Urđi and Ibn al-Shātir in his longitude models, again used al-Shātir's Moon and Mercury models, and again used Tusi's couple to create the variation in the obliquity of the ecliptic, and to produce an oscillation in the orbital planes of planets. Most probably, Copernicus became aware of Muslim non-Ptolemaic models, especially those developed by Tusi and his followers, when he was studying in Italy, where access to Islamic texts was possible.

So far, studies investigating the possible routes of transmission to Europe of the non-Ptolemaic models of the Maragheh School and information about new instruments has focused on Byzantine connections. Gregory Chioniadēs, a Byzantine astronomer, actually was in Tabriz in Ghazan Khan's period. He translated a few books from Arabic into Greek, and probably met Wabkanāwi or Nizām al-Din Nishāburi.⁴⁰ Another possible connection could be Moses Galeano, a Jewish scholar in Istanbul who travelled to Italy around 1500. Galeano knew about Islamic non-Ptolemaic models, and was part of a network of Jewish scholars who had contact with Christian scholars in Europe, especially in Italy.⁴¹ Recently a third route has been under investigation by the present author and Peter Barker (University of Oklahoma), in which the connections between Tabriz and Venice in the mid-fifteenth century are being examined. This is the period that Qushji, the last astronomer of the Samarkand observatory, was at Uzun Hassan's court, and extensive connections between his court and Venice were established to make an alliance against the Ottomans.

We still have to wait for new studies in order to develop a clear understanding of the astronomical activities at the Maragheh Observatory, and the influence of Islamic pre-Copernican non-Ptolemaic models on Copernican heliocentric models. The critical publication of all three *zijs* connected to Maragheh would reveal valuable facts about the planetary parameters they adopted, their accuracy in observation and calculation, and their observational

approaches. At the same time, an extensive investigation is needed of the cultural relationships between the Islamic world and the Latin West in order to discover possible routes of transfer between Islamic scientific productions – specifically in the field of astronomy – and Europe from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries.

Notes:

1. See, for example, F. Jamil Ragep, *Nasir al-Din al-Ṭūsī's Memoir on Astronomy*, 2 vols, New York, Springer, vol. 1, pp. 3–23; George E. Lane, “ṬUSI, NAṢIR-AL-DIN”, *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2018, available at iranicaonline.org/articles/tusi-nasir-al-din-bio (accessed 19 April 2018); George Saliba, ‘Ṭusi, Naṣir-al-Din ii. As Mathematician and Astronomer’, *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2012, available at iranicaonline.org/articles/tusi-nasir-al-din-mathematician-astronomer (accessed 30 December 2012).
2. Salim Ayduz, ‘Naṣir al-Din al-Ṭusi’s influence on Ottoman scientific literature (mathematics, astronomy and natural sciences)’, *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 17: 1–2 (2011), pp. 99–125.
3. Muhammad Muddaris Radhawi, *Ahwal wa āthār ... Nasir al-Din* (Tehran, Farhang Iran, 1976), pp. 360–5.
4. Hosein M’asoumi Hamādani, ‘Uṣtād-e Bashār’, in N. Pourjavādy and Z. Vesel, eds, *Dāneshmand-e Tus* (Tehran: Nashr-e Dāneshgāhi, 2000), pp. 24–6.
5. Ṭusi even wrote an innovative elementary text in arithmetic entitled *Jawāme‘ al-ḥesāb be’l-taqt wa’l-torāb* (‘Arithmetical compendium using board and dust’), wherein he combined two traditions of calculation with Indian and sexagesimal numbers, to be used both by mathematicians and astrologers. See Saliba, ‘Ṭusi, Naṣir-al-Din ii’.
6. Carl B. Boyer, *A History of Mathematics* (New York: Wiley, 1991), p. 243.
7. Rashid al-Din Fazl Allāh, *Jame‘ al-Tawārikh*, vol. 3 (Baku: Farhangistān-i ‘Ulūm-i Jumhūr-i Shuravī-i Süsiyālistī-i Āzarbāyjan, 1957), p. 67.
8. For Muslims’ influence on Chinese and Mongolian astronomy see Benno van Dalen, ‘Islamic and Chinese Astronomy under the Mongols: A Little-Known Case of Transmission’, in Yvonne Dold-Samplonius, Joseph W. Dauben, Menso Folkerts and Benno van Dalen, eds, *From China to Paris: 2000 Years Transmission of Mathematical Ideas* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), pp. 327–56.
9. Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 166–7.
10. Rashid al-Din, *Jame‘ al-Tawārikh*, vol. 3, p. 67.
11. Ibid.
12. For example, he exchanged letters with ‘Alam al-Din Qaysar (d. 1251), from Syria, on Euclidean theorems. See Radhawi, *Ahwal wa āthār*, pp. 182–3, 372–9.
13. Ibid., p. 9.
14. Nasir al-Din Ṭusi, *Paradise of Submission*, transl. and ed. S. J. Badakhshani (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 43, 117, 165.
15. Even in two stamps published by the Republic of Azerbaijan (2001 and 2009), Ṭusi – presented as an Azerbaijani scientist – is observing the skies with a telescope! For the 2009 stamp, see Wikipedia, ‘Naṣir al-Din al-Ṭusi’; for the 2001 stamp, see jeff560.tripod.com/images/al-tusi2.jpg.
16. Since comets were considered meteorological phenomena, they were more in the domain of interest of astrologers than astronomers.
17. Atāmalek ibn Muḥammad Jowaini, *Tārīkh-e Jahāngushā*, ed. Muḥammad Ghazwini (Tehran: Hermes, 2008), p. 845.
18. Muddaris Radawi, *Ahwal wa āthār*, pp. 40–1.
19. ‘Abdul Moḥammad Āyati, *Tahrir-e Tārīkh-e Wassāf* (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Education, 1993), pp. 29–30.
20. Rashid al-Din, *Jame‘ al-Tawārikh*, vol. 3, p. 50.

21. Ibid., p. 58.
22. Ibid., pp. 90–1.
23. Radhawī, *Aḥwal wa āthār*, p. 49.
24. Rashid al-Dīn, *Jame' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, pp. 66–7.
25. According to Ibn Shakir (see Radhawī, *Aḥwal wa āthār*, p. 48), the library in the Observatory contained about 400,000 books. Even using modern technologies, a very large space is needed for such a big library. No such a space has been found in archeological excavation of the Maragheh Observatory. Furthermore, estimating the possible available titles by the thirteenth century, they had to collect dozens of copies of each title to amass a collection of 400,000 volumes.
26. J. A. Boyle, 'The Longer Introduction to the "Zij-i-Ilkhani" of Nasir-Ad-Din Tusi', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 1963: 8, pp. 246–7.
27. Nizam al-Dīn, *Kashf-i Haqāiq Zij Ilkhāni*, Tehran, Majlis, MS 78160, folio 7.
28. Aydin Sayili, *The Observatory in Islam* (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1988). p. 195; Rashid al-Dīn, *Jame' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, p. 90.
29. Nizām al-Dīn Nishāburi, *Kashf-e Haqāiq-e Zij-e Ilkhāni*, Majlis Library, Tehran, MS #1426, 4v.
30. Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn 'Alī Khwāja al-Wābkanawī, *Zij al-muḥaqqaq al-sulṭāni 'alā uṣūl al-raṣad al-Ilkhāni*, Majlis Library, Tehran, MS 6435, folio 4–5.
31. For more details, see S. M. Mozzafari and Georg Zotti, 'The Observational Instruments at the Maragha Observatory after AD 1300', *Suhayl* 12 (2013), pp. 50–5.
32. Carlos Dorce, 'The Tāj al-azyāj of Muhyi al-Dīn al-Maghribi (d. 1283): Methods of Computation', *Suhayl* 3 (2000–03), pp. 113–212. See also Georg Saliba, *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 177–86.
33. Mozzafari and Zotti, 'Observational Instruments', pp. 46–58.
34. Although other scholars, such as Qutb al-Dīn Shirāzi, Hisām al-Dīn Shāmi and Shams al-Dīn Shirwāni, have been mentioned as astronomers who worked at Maragha, we do not know about their direct impact on the *zīj* project under the supervision of Tusi.
35. Radhawī, *Aḥwal wa āthār*, pp. 57–8.
36. Even in *Zij Ilkhani*, Tusi implicitly says that the project is not completed: 'This is whatever we have found so far and compared (with previous *zijs*), and if our life lasts longer enough and we have the support of the King of the World, we will present whatever we find later.'
37. Mozzafari and Zotti, 'Observational Instruments', pp. 47–57.
38. Tofigh Heidarzadeh, 'Patronage, Networks and Migration: Turco-Persian Scholarly Exchanges in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries', *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences* 55 (2005), pp. 419–34.
39. Bernard R. Goldstein, 'The Arabic Version of Ptolemy's Planetary Hypotheses', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 57: 4 (1967).
40. George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 194–232; Mozzafari and Zotti, 'Observational Instruments', p. 65.
41. Robert Morrison, 'A Scholarly Intermediary between the Ottoman Empire and Renaissance Europe', *Isis* 105: 1 (2014), pp. 32–57.

The Iranian Interlude: From Mongol Decline to Timur's Invasion

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Before I begin, a recapitulation of what I mean by the 'Idea of Iran' might be helpful here. Which lands are included in 'Iran'? Who are its peoples?

The late Professor Shapur Shahbazi tackles these questions in his comprehensive exposition of the 'History of the Idea of Iran'.¹ He dates the roots of the name 'Iran' to the Avestan period. Shahbazi demonstrates 'the existence of a *nation*, created when *political unity* had been achieved by many "countries", all of which shared a common Aryan heritage'.² Iran was first *Aryanshatra*, then *Iranshahr*, and finally *Iran*. Shahbazi explains that 'one should not ignore the fact that, once established, a *national identity* keeps its ideological conception even when *the name* is eclipsed by a different political appellation'.³ In other words, although the name 'Iran' vanished from official records with the ending of the Sasanian state, *Iran*, *Iranshahr*, *Mamalek-e Iran* ('Iranian lands') and *Iran-zamin* ('land of Iran') continued to express the same concept.

Two thirds of the Achaemenid world empire was non-Iranian. The appellation 'Iran' encompassed all subject nations: Persians, Arabs, Turks and others: 'The pivotal policy of this empire was tolerance. Within this vast empire, every subject nation was allowed to maintain its national identity by keeping its religion, language, traditions, and lifestyle.'⁴

Michael Axworthy is in agreement: the 'best of Iranian genius' is the 'recognition, acceptance, and tolerance of the complexity of the cultures and influences over which they ruled while retaining a strong central principle of identity and integrity'.⁵ During the post-Ilkhanid period (after 1335), 'live and let live' was a clear policy in dealings between the Sunni Karts of Herat and the Twelver Shi'i Sarbadars of Sabzavar. When the policy of tolerance was discarded by the last Kart king (*malek*), war broke out in Khorasan.

In his *Dictionary of Countries*, Yaqut al-Hammawi (d. 1229) includes lands as diverse as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Fars, Gilan, Kerman, Sistan and Khorasan within the limits of Iran, including places now separated by the Iran-Afghanistan border: 'Iranshahr is Nishapur, Quhistan, ..., Herat, Fushang,

Badghis, and Tus'.⁶ All except Quhistan are in the quintessentially Iranian province of Khorasan. Defining the extent of Khorasan is difficult. In broad terms, Khorasan stretches from the south-eastern shores of the Caspian Sea to the Hindu Kush, north to the Murghab River and Oxus, and south to Quhistan and Sistan.

I interpret the 'Idea of Iran' as reflecting the Iranian national mosaic of ethnic Tajiks, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Kurds, Lurs, Mongols, Hazaras and Baluchs – of diverse religious affiliations: Twelver Shi'a, Ismailis, Sunnis, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. These peoples spoke Persian as either their first or second language, and had adopted defining Iranian cultural conventions, but many also retained other cultural traditions. One important part of Khorasan is attached to a recently created state: Afghanistan. However, Khorasan was for millennia integral to Iran and indispensable to the 'Idea of Iran'. It was in Khorasan that the 'Idea of Iran' was resuscitated and the wholesale Arabicisation of Iran halted.

The 'Iranian Intermezzo' and 'Persian Renaissance'

I titled this paper the 'Iranian interlude' in honour of the evocative and apt phrase 'Iranian *intermezzo*', popularised by the Russian Orientalist Vladimir Minorksy (d. 1966). The *intermezzo* is the period between the demise of Arab rule in Iran and the coming of the Central Asian Turks: from c. 847, the end of the Abbasid caliphate's 'golden age', to c. 1040, the Battle of Dandanqan. During the *intermezzo*, Iranian dynasties formed and ousted Arabs from their scattered bastions, kindling a 'Persian renaissance'.⁷

Five of these Iranian regional states are well known: the Tahirids of Nishapur, who ruled from 205/821 to 259/873; the Saffarids, who ruled in Sistan from 254/867 to 290/903, and extended their rule to Fars and Khorasan; the Samanids, 261/875 to 389/999, who ruled in Khorasan and Transoxiana; the Ziyarids of the southern Caspian, 316/928 to 434/1042; and the Buyids, who ruled western Iran and Iraq from 320/932 to 447/1055. The Ziyarids occupied the land halfway between the Samanids (in the east) and the Buyids (in the west).⁸ There were also some 'minor' Iranian dynasties, such as the Kurdish Shaddadids (340–570/951–1174) in Azerbaijan and Transcaucasia and the 'Alids of Gilan and Daylam.

The Buyids were Shi'a, perhaps Zaydi. However, Shi'a did not then imply adherence to any particular sect (*madhhab*), especially since Shi'i doctrines were in flux. The Buyids supported Twelver, Ismaili, and Zaydi Shi'i communities. Since the Buyids dominated Baghdad, they exerted strong influence over the Abbasid caliphate. The Tahirids, Saffarids and Samanids nurtured the Persian renaissance that originated in Khorasan⁹ and blossomed in the east, spreading into Azerbaijan and central Iran under the Buyids and the 'minor' Iranian dynasties.

Iranian dynasts proffered claims to descent from ancient Iranian kings or Sasanian nobility. The Buyids revived ancient Iranian titles like *shahanshah* ('king of kings'). The shedding of Arab-Islamic accretions was discernible, although, where convenient, dynasts embraced putatively fictitious Arab-Islamic connections. The Buyids made false claims to Arab descent, while the Tahirids—Persians originally from around Herat—were Arabicised clients (*mawla*) of Arab governors. The Tahirids acknowledged Abbasid dominion over Iran; however, the Saffarids, the first 'genuinely independent' Iranian dynasty, refused to acknowledge them. They propagandised against the Abbasids as Arabs, and made appeals to Iranian identity.¹⁰ Claims to Arab ancestry notwithstanding, 'we can discern a much stronger trend, that of attaching Persian families to the Iranian epic past'.¹¹

Persian (the language) and Iranian (the identity) were reasserting themselves. Iranians were adapting Arab-Islamic cultural tenets through a process of 'take the best, leave the rest'. For example, the Tahirids initiated the processes by which Persian came to be written in the modified Arabic script, an ingenious Iranian adaptation that allowed them to retain the heritage and charm of the Persian language. New Persian literary traditions emerged in Khorasan: by the ninth century, Sistan, Khorasan, Bukhara, and Samarqand 'were the primary centres' for the development of a new Persian literary heritage.¹² In the late tenth or early eleventh century, eastern Persian literature became the literature of western Iran.¹³ New Persian even affected Zoroastrians who had hitherto composed their religious texts in Middle Persian (Pahlavi).¹⁴ The literary facets of the renaissance were nurtured by the courts of the Tahirids and the Samanids. The best known Samanid poet is Rudaki (d. 329/940). The Samanids stimulated interest in the histories of the ancient Iranian kings, and the stories, romances, and fables of Sasanian (Zoroastrian) Iran. Books were translated from Middle Persian into New Persian. The *Shahnameh* ('Book of Kings'), the defining Iranian epic composed by Abolqasem Ferdowsi (d. c. 411/1020), emerged from this historical context.

Nishapur was the centre of hadith studies. Scholars from the Islamic world travelled to Nishapur to learn from hadith masters (*muhaddithun*).¹⁵ Four of the canonical (*musannaf*) 'six books' of hadith integral to the Sunni interpretation of Islam are from Khorasan: 'Sahih Bukhari' of Mohammad al-Bukhari (d. 256/870); 'Sahih Muslim' of Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Nishapuri (d. 261/874); 'Jami' al-Tirmidhi' by Mohammad b. 'Isa al-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892); and 'Sunan al-Sughra' of Ahmad al-Nasa'i (d. 303/915). The 'Sunan Ibn Majah' by Mohammad b. Majah al-Qazvini (d. 273/887) is from western Iran; and the 'Sunan Abu Da'ud' of Abu Da'ud Sulayman al-Sistani (d. 275/888) is by an Iranian expatriate in eastern Iraq.

Nishapur was the crucible of an Islamic institution: the madrasa: 'Nishapur counted at least twenty-five madrasas of greater antiquity than Baghdad's'.¹⁶ The earliest recorded madrasa at Nishapur is the Maliki *madhhab*'s 'Miyan

Dahiya'. It was in operation by the late third/early tenth century,¹⁷ and antedates Cairo's al-Azhar madrasa, established c. 365/975 by the (Shi'i) Fatimid monarchs of Egypt to teach Ismaili law. Nizam al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), the Seljuq vizier and author of the *Siyasatnameh* ('Book of Government'), established his madrasa, the *Nizamiyya*, in Nishapur, and exported the Khorasani model to Baghdad in 455/1063, and thence to Arab lands, Spain and India.¹⁸

The dynasts of the *intermezzo* adhered to Sunni interpretations and diverse manifestations of Shi'ism. The depth of the Islamisation of Iranians is not clear, although conversion to Islam was increasing.¹⁹ Zoroastrianism thrived at Fars, its Sasanian epicentre; and nativist prophets preached Zoroastrian and Mazdakite beliefs. The Iranian dynasties that sprouted from Azerbaijan to Khorasan reflected manifold Sunni and Shi'i interpretations. With the exception of the Ismailis, the phenomenon of disparate Sunni, Shi'i and pre-Islamic religious ideas of Iranian character hibernated for the most part in Seljuq Iran, but the phenomenon asserted itself in the chaotic aftermath of the Mongol invasions. Patricia Crone describes the phenomenon as 'a complex of religious ideas that, however varied in space and unstable over time, has shown remarkable persistence in Iran over a period of two millennia'.²⁰ These concepts are manifest in Shi'ism, Sunnism, and Sufism, as well as in newer sects like the Ahl-e Haqq, Yazidis, Hurufis, and Noqtavis. The Sarbadars and Karts fit within a tradition of adding Iranian flavour to Arabian Islam.

Nabigha al-Ja'di, an Arab poet who died c. 70/690, not long after the Arab triumph over Sasanian Iran, writes:

O men, see how Persia has been ruined,
and its inhabitants humiliated,
they have become slaves who pasture your sheep,
as if their kingdom was a dream.²¹

The nativist revolts of early Islamic Iran, and the Hashemite rebellion of Abu Muslim al-Khorasani that was ignited in Khorasan, demonstrate that, although Persia had been 'ruined' and its peoples 'humiliated' by barbarians from the Arabian desert, Iranians were anything but 'slaves', useful only for tending to the sheep of their Arab 'masters'. The savage Arab was becoming civilised (Iranicised), and Arabic was declining in use- in interactions between Iranians and Arabs. 'Their kingdom', sophisticated and civilised, was lost but hardly forgotten: it persisted in the imagination, an 'empire of the mind'. 'Iranian-ness', *Iraniyyat*, was raising its head after the ignominy of defeat at the hands of philistines. The *intermezzo* is the epoch when Iranians threw off Arab and Abbasid domination and began re-Iranicising 'the land of Iran' (*Iran-zamin*).

The Mongols and Turks in Iran

The Iranian *intermezzo* is a lens through which we can understand post-Mongol Iran, and evaluate the 'Idea of Iran' at the period. The Mongols pillaged Iran, slayed the caliph in Baghdad, and destroyed the Ismaili centres of Iran. There was a pause, as Iranians absorbed the shock of the Mongol depredations, just as they paused after the Arab conquests. *Iraniyyat* reappeared within one century of the Arab invasions, and was nurtured during the *intermezzo*. The emergence of independent polities in Iran during the 'Iranian interlude', c. 1335–81, demonstrates how *Iraniyyat* absorbs blows but invariably resurfaces. New manifestations of *Iraniyyat* may include foreign accretions; however, the adaptation always reflects *Iraniyyat*'s resilience and Iranian ingenuity. The Persian language proves this: it re-emerged with a new script and disposable Arabic vocabulary (as Ferdowsi demonstrated in the *Shahnameh*); whereas, Egyptians and Syrians, both originally non-Arab peoples, discarded their pre-Islamic heritages, adopted Arabic, and today consider themselves Arabs – an astounding metamorphosis!

The Iranian *intermezzo* ended with the coming of the Turks. Unlike the Mongols, the Turks who migrated to Iran between c. AD 1000 and 1200, were not entirely alien to the Iranians, and most Turks were Muslim, if only nominally. The Mongols were far worse. The Chinese classify their barbarians as 'raw' or 'cooked'. The Turks were the 'cooked' variety, and the Mongols were decidedly 'raw'. Civilising the Mongols was to prove a vexing project for Iranian bureaucrats, ulama, and Sufis; but in due course, the Mongols adopted Iranian cultural and administrative practices, and converted to Islam. The Mongols of Iran, unlike the Mongols of China, were not forced to trudge back to Mongolia.²² Turks, Mongols, and Turco-Mongols became components of the resplendent cultural mosaic of Iran and Afghanistan.

The Iranian Interlude

The Iranian interlude was brief. It lasted about fifty years (1335–81), while the *intermezzo* lasted two hundred years. Nevertheless, the interlude was a critical period in Iranian history. First, the damage inflicted by the Arabs and the introduction of their religion required an extended recovery phase: the *intermezzo* gave *Iraniyyat* two centuries in which to establish itself and thwart the complete and irreversible Arabisation of Iran. Post-Mongol Iranians were not in any danger of adopting vulgar Mongolian cultural norms or, Heaven forbid, shamanism. The real danger lay in the erosion of *Iraniyyat*, and the fading of Islamic and Iranian knowledge, customs, and traditions. Countless Sunni and Shi'i ulama (judges, preachers, professors), Sufis, landed gentry, bureaucrats, merchants, craftsmen and artisans had died or fled Iran. The post-Mongol dearth of intellectual and artistic talent was compounded by the (first) 'Iranian diaspora'.²³ The Iranian 'brain drain' to Anatolia, India, Hejaz, Syria,

and Iraq in the sixth/twelfth century was prompted by deteriorating economic conditions. The scarcity of qualified Shi'i ulama, for instance, plagued the fledgling Sarbadar state, as it would the nascent Safavid state. Survivors and refugees returning to Iran propagated Islamic and Iranian learning and traditions, while adapting *Iraniyyat* to dynamic social and political conditions.

There is a critical distinction between the *Iraniyyat* of the *intermezzo* and the *Iraniyyat* of the interlude: before and during the interlude (as with the *intermezzo*), memory was preserved through both existing and novel conduits. Iranians accepted selected Mongol imports (for example, their 'animal calendar' and vocabulary), but *Iraniyyat* also entailed shaping the Mongols. The conversion of the Ilkhan (Mahmud) Ghazan Khan in 694/1295 was a colossal triumph for Iran. Thenceforth, the relationship between ruler and subjects shifted in favour of the Iranians; the alien khan had become the familiar Muslim sultan. In the *intermezzo*, *Iraniyyat* entailed shaping an Arab import, Islam,²⁴ to render it compatible with *Iraniyyat*. For example, Bukhari records 7,275 (c. 4,000 unique) hadith, of which perhaps half relate to rituals and purity, issues of paramount importance to Zoroastrians contemplating conversion to Islam. Zoroastrians, by contrast with pagan Arabs—nomads of the desert—emphasised cleanliness in everyday aspects of life.²⁵ Hence, the abundance of hadith that target uniquely Iranian concerns. The strongest evidence for this is the hadith on menstruation, which aim to allay an exaggerated Zoroastrian anxiety.

By the advent of the interlude, in 1335, over a century after the Mongol conquests, Iran had recovered to some degree. Iranian vassal states, of Tajik and Turkic heritages, had established themselves under the Mongols, and were poised to become independent kingdoms when the Mongol government in Iran collapsed. As with the *intermezzo*, indigenous dynasties prospered: the Karts of Herat; Sarbadars of Sabzavar; Muzaffars of Fars, Kerman and Yazd; the Qara-Qoyunlu ('black sheep') Turkmen confederation in Azerbaijan; and the Jalayrids of Iraq-e 'Arab (Mesopotamia) and Iraq-e 'Ajam (western Iran). The Karts and the Sarbadars represent competing vehicles for the 'Idea of Iran'.

The Karts

The Kart dynasty of Herat originated in the Ghur mountains of the Hindu Kush. Their predecessors were castellans under the Ghurids who ruled from c. 401/1011 to c. 610/1213. When Chinggis Khan's armies were advancing in Iran, the castellan of Khaysar in Ghur, Rokh al-Din Marghani (d. 643/1245), was offered an imperial decree (*yarligh*) to rule as Chinggis Khan's vassal. Marghani's maternal nephew, Shams al-Din Mohammad Kart (r. 643–76/1245–78), instituted the Kart dynasty (*Al-e Kart*).

The years 1220–78 were appalling times in Iran. Balkh, Nishapur, Herat and Merv, the four leading cities of Khorasan, were pillaged and ruined, along with hundreds of townships and villages. Thousands of Iranians were massacred,

and artisans, craftsmen, and young women were deported to Inner Asia. Survivors were exploited by rapacious Mongol tax collectors. The accession of Shams al-Din Kart was a seminal moment in the history of Iran: The Kart dynasty helped consolidate and revitalise eastern Iran. In 649/1251, the Mongol grand Qa'an, Möngke (r. 1251–58), gave Shams al-Din a *yarligh* that granted him suzerainty over an immense tract of Iran.²⁶ The Kartid domains included Herat, the principal city in Khorasan, and stretched to Torbat-e Jam in the west; the Murghab River and the Oxus to the north; Kabul, Qandahar, and the Indus to the east and south-east; and Quhistan and Sistan to the south. This comprises most of modern Afghanistan and a section of eastern Iran. The 'seed money',²⁷ granted to the Kart *malek* was to allow him to establish a stable state at Herat, advance Mongol imperial policies inside Iran, and participate in Mongol campaigns 'as needed'. Shams al-Din's tenure covered a crucial period in Iranian history, where the Ilkhans (r. 1256–1335) were struggling to secure Iran's frontiers against encroachments by rival Chingissid houses:²⁸ the Golden Horde,²⁹ in the Kazakh Steppe, Qipchaq Steppe, Rus and lower Volga; and the Chaghatay,³⁰ based in western Turkestan – from the 'land of the Uyghur' to Transoxiana.

Securing Iran's frontiers against incursions by Turkic nomads and Mongol rivals was a Kartid obligation. Contrary to John Andrew Boyle's assertion that apart from Chaghatay invasions during the reign of Ilkhan Öljeitü (r. 1304–16), 'the eastern frontiers of Iran were to remain comparatively inviolate' until Timur,³¹ there were armed infiltrations into Khorasan from across the Oxus.³² Successive waves of Turkic and Turco-Mongolian nomads migrated to acquire food, pasture and water. Large-scale migrations by nomads,³³ with their families and herds of four-footers, placed heavy social, economic, and ecological pressures on Khorasan's sedentary and nomadic peoples. After a harvest was plundered in 717/1317 by the Chaghatay, *malek* Ghiyath al-Din Mohammad Kart (r. 707–29/1307–29), the grandson of Shams al-Din, bitterly opined that the effect was akin to the ravages of locusts (*malakh*), and now, the peoples of Khorasan had no cereals (*ghalla*).³⁴

Socio-economic conditions in Khorasan, from Balkh to Herat, to the Oxus, Murghab, Sistan, and the Indus, remained fragile. Recovery from the Mongol depredations and depopulations was progressing slowly, if at all. Immigrants competed with inhabitants for resources, thus exacerbating social and economic problems. Securing Iran's eastern frontiers became the paramount duty of the Karts. Shams al-Din also campaigned in north-western Iran, helping to secure that frontier against the Golden Horde.³⁵ The Karts protected Iran's eastern borders for 140 years, but were engulfed by the Turco-Mongol invasions led by Timur. The Karts preserved the 'Idea of Iran' by maintaining Iran's eastern boundaries, and by postponing the Turkification of Iranian Khorasan.³⁶ Transoxiana, to illustrate the point, had become a majority-Turkic area through the continual inflows of Inner Asian nomads.

Rebuilding, repopulating, and revitalising the city of Herat and the Herat River Valley was another major Kartid responsibility.

Following the Mongol invasions, Khorasan lay desolate. Those not killed or deported by the Mongols fled or died from famines and pestilences. The Herat River, with its complex hydrological system of channels, dams, and sluices, had irrigated the Herat River Valley and supplied the city. Agricultural and pastoral activities had now come to standstill.

Socio-economic improvements in Iran became evident between 1278 and 1335. The Ilkhanid vizier, Rashid al-Din Fazlallah, credited himself and his master Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304) for the improved conditions. The Karts, however, were already engaged in renewal projects, namely, the restoration of hydrological systems and the rebuilding of infrastructure.

In the Herat region, a 'spider-web' network of channels, aqueducts, sluices and dams stored, conveyed and allocated waters from the Herat River to the walled city and to the myriad orchards and farms in its vicinities. Some components of this complex system that had fallen into disuse were easier to repair than others. Subterranean channels (*qanat*, *kariz*) were especially labour intensive and costly to repair. Fortunately, however, Herat was more dependent on overground channels than on *qanats*. Even before the Karts arrived in Herat (c. 649/1251), survivors and migrants were encouraged by the Mongols to reopen the primary waterways. In 635/1237–38, in accordance with a decree issued by the Qa'an, Ögodei (r. 1229–41), restoration work began on the arterial waterways.³⁷ The *Juy-e Enjil*, which supplied the inner city, opened in 638/1240–41.³⁸ The Karts continued with restoration activities leading to the reopening of waterways, and built cisterns (*hawz*) and water-control systems (*natarah*).³⁹ In 733/1333, *malek* Mo'ezz al-Din Mohammad Kart (r. 732–71/1332–70) devised a scheme for the distribution of the waters of the Herat River. This was vital to the responsible management of resources in the region. His methods proved successful, and were reinstated by later Timurids after having fallen into disuse under the early Timurids.⁴⁰

Construction activities in Herat increased with Shams al-Din Kart's accession.⁴¹ Post-Mongol predecessors of the Karts had taken steps toward revitalising Herat: in 637/1239–40, three kiosks (*kushk*) and seven shops were erected outside Herat's east gate.⁴² Shams al-Din built a workshop (*karkhanah*)⁴³ and bazaar, situated beyond the south gate at the insistence of Ilkhan Abaqa (r. 1265–81):⁴⁴ the Mongols still forbade construction inside the city. By 699/1300, there was a bazaar within the inner city. Herat's citadel, Qal'ah-ye Ekhtiyar al-Din, which had a plaza (*meydan*) at its base, was erected before c. 699/1300.⁴⁵ Three municipal commons (*baghs*) were laid out;⁴⁶ and a hammam and two caravansaries were constructed. Ghiyath al-Din Kart's wealth and political stature increased after 1319 for helping the Ilkhans to repulse the aforementioned Chaghatay invasions. He was showered with wealth, honours, and favours; and Heratis received a three-year waiver of

taxes.⁴⁷ The *malek* spent liberally on projects in Herat and its purlieus; he restored Herat's dilapidated Friday mosque (*masjed-e jami'*), neglected for a century; and donated madrasas, mosques, domes (*gonbad*), and hospices in Herat and elsewhere. His son Mo'ezz al-Din patronised Herat's Sufis by founding their *khanaqahs*. The Karts sponsored at least four madrasas and twelve *khanaqahs* in Herat.⁴⁸ In medieval Iran, the *khanaqah* was more than a hospice for mystics searching for God: Islamic curricula were taught in hospices and in seminaries (sg. *madrasa*).

Before the Mongols, Herat's population was estimated at 50,000. The population of the eponymous province was possibly 150,000. In 638/1241, twenty years after its downfall, Herat's population was estimated as 6,900.⁴⁹ Its population in the 1330s was estimated by Lawrence Potter at 20–30,000.⁵⁰ The population of the province is not known, but before the Mongols it contained c. 400 villages, but in 1420, there were only around 215 villages.⁵¹ While this estimate reflects a nearly 50% decrease in villages since pre-Mongol times, it still represents a significant increase in population: the population of both city and province will have tended towards zero as people fled, were killed or deported. The survivors were those who had found refuge in Khorasan's mountains or farther afield, such as Mazandaran, Anatolia, Hejaz, Egypt, and India. Only a small subset of survivors, chiefly those hiding in the mountains, would have subsequently returned to the area. By restoring hydrological systems and reviving agriculture, the Karts contributed to the revitalisation of the province. The pre-Kartid population estimate of 6,900 was proffered by the historian Sayf al-Haravi to demonstrate that Herat's population had increased through inward migration following improvements to its critical infrastructure under the Mongols.⁵² In the Kartid era, the pace of migration to Herat seems to have quickened, as a result of redevelopment projects and repairs to hydrological systems.

The Sarbadars

The origin of the Sarbadars is shrouded in myth. Writers have spun genesis narratives about them that have little basis in fact. The Sarbadars' origins have been traced to a fantastical Shi'i uprising, in which two brothers –with the suspiciously Shi'i names of Hoseyn and Hasan– lead a rebellion against Mongol envoys who had made 'un-Islamic' demands (for wine and women). What is certain is that a rebellion in a town in the Bayhaq district of Khorasan, in the chaotic period that followed the death of the last Ilkhan, Abu Sa'id Bahadur (d. 736/1335), resulted in the founding of a minor polity. At first, the Sarbadars kept themselves amused with brigandage; hence the appellation, *sar-ba-dar*, 'head-on-the-gallows'. The Sarbadars were initially knowingly evasive about their origins: 'perhaps half Shi'i and half Sunni'.⁵³ The Sarbadar polity only became a Twelver Shi'i (*ithna-'ashariyya*) state about twenty-five years later.

The bandits allied with Shaykh Hasan Juri, a charismatic Sufi with indeterminate Shi'i proclivities. Juri's acolytes were called the Shaykhiyya. In 743/1342, the Sarbadar and Shaykhiyya armies marched on Herat. The Karts and Sarbadars met near Zavah (Torbat-e Heyderiyya). The Karts, commanded by Mo'ezz al-Din, were triumphant. Juri was killed: murdered by his Sarbadar 'allies'. For two decades, the Sarbadars and the Shaykhiyya persisted with their ill-fated union, suffering a series of violent convulsions and undermining each other at every opportunity. The Sarbadar state, now based at Sabzavar, was unstable until 763/1362, when Khvajah 'Ali Mo'ayyad (r. 763–83/1362–81) violently terminated the governing Shaykhiyya–Sarbadar coalition and took control of the state himself. He put the Sarbadar state on the path to becoming a Twelver Shi'i state. The state had hitherto been officially Sunni, minting its coins (*sekkah*) with Sunni formulae. Mo'ayyad purged the region of Shaykhiyya. Survivors of his persecutions found refuge in Kartid Herat and Muzaffarid Fars.

The Sarbadars, under 'Ali Mo'ayyad, reached an agreement with the Karts under Mo'ezz al-Din. There is no direct evidence that the two parties formally established *détente*; however, there is a letter from 768/1366 describing Mo'ezz al-Din's meeting with Mohammad Bik, the chieftain of the Jawni-Qorban clan, a Mongol polity occupying the Mashhad–Tus area. The letter indicates that the meeting, which took place in the inviolable sanctuary of the mausoleum of Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad-e Jam, enabled the two parties to reach an agreement that would advance 'the security and the tranquillity of Muslims':⁵⁴ in essence, an *entente cordiale*. Mo'ayyad reached a settlement with Mohammad Bik.⁵⁵ It is very likely the Sarbadars and Karts had conferred and agreed to apportion Khorasan: the Karts would have dominion from Torbat-e Jam to the east, north, and south (lands already under Kartid dominion); and the Sarbadars were permitted to expand west of Torbat-e Jam, as far toward the Caspian Sea as Mo'ayyad could advance. John Masson Smith argues that 'Ali Mo'ayyad came to an agreement with Bik because he 'needed peace in the east because he had to make war in the west'.⁵⁶ This logic applies to Sarbadarid–Kartid relations, too. The Jawni-Qorban retained their Mashhad–Tus enclave. The powerful Sufis at Torbat-e Jam were allied with the Karts and had intermarried with them by c. 702/1302–03. Their town lay just inside the Kartid state's western boundary with the Sarbadars.

'Ali Mo'ayyad's Twelver Shi'i programme failed. He minted coins with Shi'i formulae and the names of the twelve imams;⁵⁷ he tried assiduously to wean the people of his state from unorthodox Shi'i practices.⁵⁸ Mo'ayyad failed in part because his state lacked qualified Twelver Shi'i ulama to guide the faithful: he apparently beseeched Ibn Makki, Shi'ism's 'first martyr' (*al-shahid al-awwal*), to come to Khorasan and teach Shi'ism to the masses.⁵⁹ Mo'ayyad also failed because the Shaykhiyya were destabilising his state. Rebels received assistance from external actors like the Muzaffarids. When

Mo'ezz al-Din died in 771/1370, his bellicose and 'imprudent' (*ghafel*) son,⁶⁰ Ghiyath al-Din Pir 'Ali, decided to terminate the Kartid-Sarbadarid *détente*. Perhaps he was seeking to emulate his father's triumph at Zavah.⁶¹ Bigotry was also a critical factor in his decision: Pir 'Ali obtained a fatwa from a Hanafi madrasa at Herat proclaiming him duty-bound to defend Sunnis. The newly-minted *ghazi* initiated anti-Sarbadar military campaigns;⁶² and armed Shaykhiyya rebels, which his father had refused to do. Escalating Kartid campaigns led to destruction in Khorasan. The Sarbadarid and Kartid states were destabilised, militarily enervated, and impoverished by the protracted conflict.

The Idea of Iran: the Sunni Karts and the Shi'i Sarbadars

Subsequent to the collapse of the Ilkhanate with sultan Abu Sa'id's death, Mo'ezz al-Din Kart was the de facto *padishah* of eastern Khorasan. Between 746 and 750–51, he struck coins in his name:⁶³ minting *sekkah* in one's name was one of the three main symbols of legitimacy and sovereignty.⁶⁴ However, in 750/1349, he formally declared his independence from the Mongols, angering the Chaghatay Mongols for slighting Chingissid protocols. In bombastic language, Mo'ezz al-Din claimed that he wanted to purge Khorasan of heresies and impieties, namely, the Sarbadars. He demanded loyalty from *a'yan*, amirs, ulama, and shaykhs in Herat and its dependencies.⁶⁵ The backstory to the declaration is too complicated to be explained here.⁶⁶ Mo'ezz al-Din never declared war on the Sarbadars; he maintained the peace despite having a legitimate *casus belli*: the Sarbadars had murdered his father-in-law, Togha-Timur (d. 754/1353), the (nominal) Chingissid suzerain of Khorasan. The Kart vizier urged him in polemical language to fight the Sarbadars, but his advice was rejected.⁶⁷ The 'live and let live' tolerance described by Shapur Shahbazi, whereby 'every subject nation was allowed to maintain its national identity by keeping its religion, language, traditions and lifestyle',⁶⁸ was manifest between 743/1342 (battle at Zavah) and 771/1370 (death of Mo'ezz al-Din). When Pir 'Ali veered from his father's diplomatic path, he brought disaster to Khorasan. 'Ali Mo'ayyad was pragmatic and became Timur's vassal, but Pir 'Ali elected to fight him. After a brief struggle, Herat surrendered. The city was spared the fearsome *qatl-e 'amm*, the general massacre and rapine usually meted out to cities that resisted Timur.

Kartid Herat was an incubator for novel Iranian cultural expressions. The Herat of Shah Rokh b. Timur (r. 807–50/1405–47) was modelled along Kartid contours, although later Timurid sultans imposed their own concepts of urban planning.⁶⁹ Certain Timurid artistic expressions had Kartid origins: 'Timurid brilliance lay in the codification of these pre-existing forms and ideas, a development that gave rise to a uniformity of artistic production characterised by an unprecedented refinement and lyricism.'⁷⁰ The Kartid kings cannot boast of a poet of the calibre of Hafiz (d. 1389) or Rudaki, although Kartid Herat did

produce a fairly well-known poet, Ibn Yamin Faryumadi (d. 769/1368). A Shi'i, Ibn Yamin had been the Sarbadars' poet until he was captured at Zavah and became 'booty'. At one point in time, the Karts had over forty poets at court.⁷¹ They patronised the Ismaili poet, Nizari Quhistani (d. 720/1320), who, despite his own religious convictions, cheerfully eulogised his Sunni patrons. Sayf al-Haravi, the author of the indispensable *History of Herat*, had a Kartid patron.

Kartid Herat nurtured Iranian socio-religious positions that later gained prominence in the Ottoman empire, specifically, the *seyhülislam* (shaykh al-islam);⁷² and in Timurid and Safavid Iran, the shaykh al-islam and the *sadr*.⁷³ The post of shaykh al-islam was also adopted by the Delhi sultanate.⁷⁴

The shaykh al-islam was an organic Khorasani socio-political institution that became a formidable political office under the Safavids and Ottomans. A shaykh al-islam was a man of high socio-political standing and probity, and a savant in the Islamic sciences: 'to say that a man was Shaykh al-Islam was to say all'.⁷⁵ A shaykh al-islam's obligations consisted of social and legal duties: helping peasants, the needy, widows and orphans; and hearing civil cases and notarising contracts and deeds. A shaykh al-islam became the certifier of teachers (*sahib al-qubul*).⁷⁶ This practice was prevalent in Nishapur and introduced to Herat in c. 1000 AD. Abdallah Ansari (d. 481/1089), the 'sage of Herat', was shaykh al-islam of Herat.⁷⁷

Sa'd al-Din Mas'ud Taftazani (d. 793/1390) was an eminent scholar and Mo'ezz al-Din's confidant. There is no probative evidence that he was shaykh al-islam of Herat, but it is likely that he was a shaykh al-Islam. He was referred to as shaykh al-Islam in a Kartid decree. There were shaykh al-islams at Chisht-e Sharif and Torbat-e Jam in the Kartid era: it is conceivable that an eminent scholar at Herat was prevailed on to assume the shaykh al-islam's responsibilities. Taftazani is the obvious choice. Taftazani's grandson, Qotb al-Din Yahya (d. 887/1483), became Herat's first Timurid shaykh al-islam, installed in office by Shah Rokh (the date is not known). Qotb al-Din's son, Sayf al-Din Ahmad (d. 916/1511), inherited the post; he became the last Sunni shaykh al-islam of Herat.

One other 'Islamic office' can be attributed to the Karts: the *sadarat* (office of the *sadr*), the official responsible for supervising pious endowments (*waqf*) in Timurid and Safavid Iran. In Rabi' II 782/5 July–2 August 1380, Pir 'Ali Kart appointed Shaykh al-Islam Zeya al-Din Yusef Jami (d. 797/1394–95) as the *sadr* ('comptroller') of the Herat region's Islamic charities and religious buildings.⁷⁸ This Kartid office was a unique creation; it was subsequently transformed into a formidable religious office by the Timurids and the Safavids.

Unlike the courts of the Muzaffarids and Karts, the Sarbadar state never attained the level of prosperity and stability necessary to attract poets, scholars and artisans. Nevertheless, the Sarbadarid contribution to the 'Idea of Iran' is

unique and significant. From at least the reign of Ghiyath al-Din to that of Pir 'Ali, the Karts saw themselves as traditional Iranian *padishahs*. When Ghiyath al-Din and Mo'ezz al-Din erected seminaries and hospices, restored Herat's famous congregational mosque,⁷⁹ reopened waterways, and facilitated reconstruction, commerce, trade, and agricultural production, they were operating just like Iranian kings of bygone epochs, albeit in Islamic garb. Three generations of Karts safeguarded Iran's eastern frontier against the Turanian (Chaghatayid) menace. Pir 'Ali Kart's inability to thwart Timur is not, in my view, blameworthy: the sundering of the 'Chaghatay dam' appears to have been inevitable. It was just a question of time.⁸⁰ By the end of the seventh/thirteenth century, the Kartid state had forged its interpretation of *Iraniyyat* and *Islamiyyat* ('Islam-ness') and was stamping its brand onto Herat and eastern Khorasan.

'Ali Mo'ayyad created a unique Iranian state, one squarely within the framework of *Iraniyyat*. Like the Buyid and 'Alid states, the Sarbadar state's *Iraniyyat* and *Islamiyyat* were fashioned from Shi'i tenets. The Sarbadar state was mixed: part Sunni, part Shi'i. Mo'ayyad was not intolerant of Sunnis; he was intolerant of the extremist (*ghulat*) Shi'i doctrines of the Shaykhiyya. John Smith pinpoints 'moral revulsion' as fuelling 'Ali Mo'ayyad's monomaniacal and pitiless persecutions of the Shaykhiyya.⁸¹ Mo'ayyad's stewardship of the Twelver Shi'i state was praised by Timurid historians.⁸² Mo'ayyad *publicly* abjured his Shi'i beliefs when he submitted to Timur, an act which can probably be explained by the ancient axiom that 'people follow the religion of their kings'. The project to institute and nurture a Twelver Shi'i state in Iran had to await the Safavids. The struggles experienced by Mo'ayyad in attempting to consolidate his Twelver Shi'i state presage the travails of the Safavids: (i) the shortage of trained Shi'i ulama and the imperative to educate the masses in the tenets and rituals of 'correct' Twelver Shi'ism; (ii) the difficulties of eradicating Shi'i *ghulat* doctrines; and (iii) the imperative to eliminate destabilising religio-military forces. The Safavid shahs' relationship with the Qizilbash echoes the Shaykhiyya-Sarbadar union: both involved intrigues and coups. Shah 'Abbas I, 'the Great' (r. 1571–1629) was forced to subjugate the Qizilbash.

The 'Iranian interlude', like the 'Iranian *intermezzo*', was epochal: regional Iranian kingdoms of Turkic and Tajik stock appeared and entrenched themselves under the Ilkhans, and with the collapse of Mongol rule, became independent Iranian *padishahs*. The Karts and Sarbadars exhibited contrasting interpretations of *Iraniyyat* and *Islamiyyat*. Their distinctive interpretations of these concepts safeguarded the 'Idea of Iran' for succeeding generations by: (i) protecting Iran's eastern frontiers, which remained relatively stable until the Safavid and Qajar periods; (ii) revitalising devastated regions; (iii) fostering an environment that encouraged novel cultural expressions; (iv) nurturing the offices of the *sadr* and the shaykh al-islam and other socio-religious activities;

and (v) rejuvenating the idea of a Twelver Shi'i Iranian state – an idea brought to fulfilment by the Safavids.

It would be unfair to the Sarbadars and Karts to compare the interlude to the *intermezzo* using metrics like quality and quantity of literary production. The Iranians of the *intermezzo*, observing the inexorable march of Islam and the steady decline of their autochthonous faith, Zoroastrianism, moulded an alien religious importation to fit *Iraniyyat*: creating hadith collections that addressed Iranian anxieties, and developing madrasas for the methodological propagation of scholarship. Iranians of the *intermezzo* prevented the irreversible Arabicisation of Iran. The burdens on Iranians of the interlude manifested themselves in other ways: post-Mongol Iranians had to rebuild destroyed settlements and depopulated regions; and encourage Iranian and Islamic learning consequent to the exodus or deaths of Shi'i and Sunni ulama, scholars, writers, architects, artisans, and craftsmen. They achieved this by nurturing institutions like the madrasa, *khanaqah*, *sadr*, and shaykh al-islam; through Persian-language literatures and histories of Islam and Iran; and through assorted architectural and artistic productions unique to the Ilkhanid and Kartid eras. Novel expressions of *Iraniyyat* and *Islamiyyat*, in the form of the Sunni Karts and Shi'i Sarbadars, invigorated the 'Idea of Iran' and preserved Iranian culture for later generations.

Notes:

1. Shapur Shahbazi, 'History of the Idea of Iran', in V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart, eds, *The Birth of the Persian Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).
2. Ibid., p. 103 (emphasis in original).
3. Ibid., p. 108 (emphasis in original).
4. Ibid., p. 104.
5. Michael Axworthy, *A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind* (New York: Perseus, 2008), p. 34.
6. Yaqut al-Hammavi, *Mo'jam al-boldan*, 5 vols (Beirut: Dar Sadar, 1979–86), vol. 1, p. 289; Barbier de Meynard, *Dictionnaire Géographique* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1861), pp. 63–4.
7. Vladimir Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* (London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1953), p. 110.
8. Vladimir Minorsky, 'Geographical Factors in Persian Art', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 9: 3 (1938), p. 628.
9. Minorsky, *Caucasian History*, p. 110.
10. David Morgan, *Medieval Persia, 1040–1797* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 20.
11. C. Edmund Bosworth, 'The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran and the Search for Dynastic Connections with the Past', *Iran* 11 (1973), p. 55.
12. Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 126–7.
13. Ibid., p. 126.
14. Bosworth, 'Heritage of Rulership -', p. 51; E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia: From the Earliest Times until Firdawsi* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1909), p. 109.
15. Richard W. Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
16. Ibid., p. 147. For a list of madrasas and *nizamiyyas*, see Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 249–55.
17. Bulliet, *Patricians*, p. 249.
18. Bulliet, *Islam*, pp. 148–9.
19. Ibid., pp. 37–44 (discussion), at p. 39 (Fig. 3.1: 'Conversion to Islam in Iran').
20. Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. vii.
21. Ibid., p. 7.
22. David Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p. 150.
23. Bulliet, *Islam*, pp. 150ff.
24. The Islamic message is 'in a clear Arabic language' (Q 26:195); 'a Qur'an in Arabic, for people who understand' (Q 41:03); and 'had We revealed [the Qur'an] to any of the non-Arabs [...] they would not have believed in it' (Q 26:198–9).
25. Even for Muslims, ritual purity was optional, particularly where water was scarce. Nasir-e Khusraw recounts that, 400 years after Islam, the Arabs of the desert 'were as close as anyone could be to irreligion, there being people there who never performed ritual ablutions from one year to the next'. See Wheeler Thackston, transl., *Nasir-e Khusraw's Book of Travels* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2001), p. 115.
26. Sayf al-Haravi, *Tarikhnamah-ye Harat*, ed. Gholam-Reza Tabataba'i-Majd (Tehran: Entesharat-e Asatir, 1383/2004), pp. 202–3.
27. Thomas Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 71.

28. On Mongol rivalries over appanages, see Peter Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal* 22: 3 (1978); Thomas Allsen, 'Sharing Out the Empire: Apportioned Lands under the Mongols', in Anatoly Khazanov and André Wink, eds, *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), pp. 172–90.
29. On the Golden Horde, see René Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp. 392–408.
30. On the Chaghatay, see *ibid.*, pp. 326–46.
31. John Andrew Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans', in J. A. Boyle, ed., *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 360.
32. Russell Kempiners, 'The Struggle for Khurasan: Aspects of Political, Military, and Socio-Economic Interaction in the Early 8th/14th Century' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1985), pp. 70ff.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 121; al-Haravi, *Harat*, pp. 649–50. Haravi claims 100,000 migrants died of cold and famine. This is a convenient figure, but illustrative of the magnitude of the migrations.
34. Al-Haravi, *Harat*, pp. 661–2.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 316–24.
36. For Turkic tribes in northern Afghanistan in the twentieth century, see Gunnar Jarring, *On the Distribution of Turk Tribes in Afghanistan* (Lund: Gleerup, 1939).
37. al-Haravi, *Harat*, p. 146.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
39. For a list of the hydrological systems of Herat, see Terry Allen, *A Catalogue of the Toponyms and Monuments of Timurid Herat* (Cambridge: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1981), pp. 12–22 (channels), 23–4 (*natarah*), 25 (*hawz*).
40. Qasem b. Yusef Haravi, *Resalah-e Tariq-e Qesmat-e Ab-e Qolb*, ed. Mayil Haravi (Tehran: Bonyad-e Farhang-e Iran, 1968), pp. 1–15 -; Allen, *Toponyms and Monuments*, p. 10.
41. For a list of Kartid building activities, see Allen, *Toponyms and Monuments*, pp. 228–31.
42. al-Haravi, *Harat*, p. 154.
43. Workshop or factory; the term surely had different connotations at the period.
44. al-Haravi, *Harat*, p. 311.
45. Allen, *Toponyms and Monuments*, pp. 34–5 (Catalogue No. 54).
46. *Bagh-e shahr* ('city garden'), *bagh-e safid* ('white garden'), *bagh-i zaghan* ('raven's garden'). *Ibid.*, pp. 205–7 (No. 645), p. 209 (No. 651), pp. 211–15 (No. 653).
47. al-Haravi, *Harat*, p. 741; Ahmad Fasih Khvafi, *Mojmal-e Fasihi*, ed. Mohammad Farrokh, 3 vols (Mashhad: Entesharat-e Bastan 1339/1960), vol. 3, pp. 30–31.
48. Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1983), pp. 46–7 and n. 99.
49. al-Haravi, *Tarikhnamah-ye Harat*, p. 163.
50. Lawrence Potter, 'The Kart Dynasty of Herat: Religion and Politics in Medieval Iran', (unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1992), pp. 152–3.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 153 and n. 3, referencing Dorothea Krawulsky, *Horasan zur Timuridenzeit [Tarikh-e Hafez-e Abru]*, 2 vols (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1982–4), vol. 1, pp. 22–9.
52. al-Haravi, *Harat*, pp. 159–63.
53. John Masson Smith, *The History of the Sarbadar Dynasty 1336–1381 AD and Its Sources* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970), p. 119.
54. Yusef-e Ahl, *Fara'id-e Ghiyasi*, ed. Heshmat Moayyad (Tehran: Entesharat-e Bonyad-e Farhang-e Iran, vol. I, 1356/1977; vol. II, 1358/1979), vol. 1, p. 276.
55. Smith, *Sarbadar Dynasty*, p. 148.

56. Ibid.
57. Minted between 763/1362 and 772/1371. Ibid., pp. 76ff, 197–8, 202–3.
58. Shivan Mahendrarajah, 'The Sarbadars of Sabzavar: Re-Examining Their "Shi'a" Roots and Alleged Goal to "Destroy Khurasanian Sunnism"', *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 5: 4 (2012), pp. 394–6.
59. Ibid., pp. 395–6.
60. On this assessment, assuredly originating with Timur, see Hafez-e Abru, *Tarikh-e Salatin-e Kart*, ed. Mir-Hashim Muhaddis (Tehran: Markaz-e Pezhuheshi-e Miras-e Maktub, 1389/2010), p. 207.
61. Smith, *Sarbadar Dynasty*, p. 150.
62. Ibid., pp. 151–2.
63. Potter, 'Kart Dynasty', p. 50 and n. 3.
64. The *khatib*'s praising of the sultan's name at the Friday sermon, *khutbah*, and the sultan's wearing of *tiraz* (embroidery) are the remaining symbols.
65. Yusef-e Ahl, *Fara'id-e Ghiyasi* (Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. Orient. Fol. 110), fol. 287b–289a; idem, *Fara'id-e Ghiyasi* (Istanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih 4012), 444b–445b; idem, *Fara'id-e Ghiyasi* (Tehran: University of Tehran, MS 4756), pp. 618–20.
66. See Shivan Mahendrarajah, 'A Revised History of Mongol, Kart, and Timurid Patronage of the Shrine of Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad-e Jam', *Iran* 54: 2 (2016).
67. Mahendrarajah, 'Sarbadars', pp. 392–3.
68. Shahbazi, 'Idea of Iran', p. 104.
69. Allen, *Timurid Herat*, p. 54.
70. Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), p. 166.
71. Potter, 'Kart Dynasty', p. 163.
72. Michael Pixley, 'The Development and Role of the *Şeyhülislam* in Early Ottoman History', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 96: 1 (1976); and Bilal Kuşpınar, 'The Community of the Learned and *Şeyhülislam* in the Early Ottoman State (1300–1566)', *Al-Shajarah* 2: 2 (1997), pp. 141–87.
73. Shiro Ando, 'The Shaykh al-Islam as a Timurid Office: A Preliminary Study', *Islamic Studies* 33: 2 (1994); Willem Floor, 'The *Sadr* or Head of the Safavid Religious Administration, Judiciary and Endowment and Other Members of the Religious Institution', *Zeitschriften der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 150 (2000).
74. K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, 1961), pp. 159–64.
75. Richard W. Bulliet, 'The Shaikh Al-Islam and the Evolution of Islamic Society', *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972), p. 61.
76. Bulliet, *Patricians*, pp. 50–51.
77. Ibid., p. 53; Bulliet, 'Shaikh Al-Islam', pp. 60–61.
78. Yusef-e Ahl, *Fara'id-e Ghiyasi* (, Ms. Orient. Fol. 110), fol. 303b–305a (appointment decree); Gottfried Herrmann, 'Zur Entstehung des Sadr-Amtes', in Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann, eds, *Die Islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1979), pp. 278–95 (discussion).
79. Mo'ezz al-Din restored the mosque after an earthquake in 765/1363–64. Hafez-e Abru, *Salatin-e Kart*, pp. 191–2.
80. This is a topic that cannot be treated here properly. In essence, successive waves of nomads from Inner Asia had been moving into the Iranian Plateau for millennia and migrating as far as India, Anatolia and the Near East. Ecological pressures were building in Transoxiana, with insufficient pastures for livestock. Socioeconomic and population pressures weighed heavily on humans, too...

81. Smith, *Sarbadar Dynasty*, p. 147.

82. For example, Dawlatshah al-Samarqandi, *Tadhkirat al-Shu'ara'*, ed. E. G. Browne (Leiden: Brill, 1900), p. 287; Khvafi, *Mojmal-e Fasihi*, vol. 3, p. 96.

Sufism in Late Mongol and Early Timurid
Persia, from ‘Ala’ al-Dawla Simnānī
(d. 736/1326) to Shāh Qāsim Anvār
(d. 837/1434)

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Despite the existence of a coterie of scholars who have written with some discernment on the history of Sufism during the Mongol (1206–1336) and Timurid (1381–1506) periods,¹ the relationship between Sufi mystics and the Mongols and Timurids has been distinctly understudied by historians of medieval Persia.² In what follows, I will focus both on the Sufis’ relations to outward political and social history, as well on the universal principles and mystical ideas that flourished among the Sufi mystics of the epoch.³ This study embraces the Mongol, Timurid and Turkmen periods (roughly the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries), starting with a brief summary of Sufi–Mongol relations in Persia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The Kingdom of Spiritual Poverty: Mongols Among Sufis

Scholars concur that the most important spiritual force in the Safavid period was undoubtedly Sufism,⁴ which underwent a renaissance during this period.⁵ Although Sufism at the beginning of the twelfth century has been described as the ‘institutionalized mass religion’ of Persia, in the oft-repeated phrase of the great American historian of Islam, Marshall Hodgson, the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries were its epoch of greatest flourishing.⁶ A century before the Mongol invasion of Persia, Hodgson writes, Sufism had become ‘the most important inward religious experience in the region from Nile to Oxus ...’⁷ And the later part of what he describes as the Earlier Middle Period (945–1258) witnessed the most important period of activity in the development of Sufism, in which:

The ‘*ulamā*’ scholars, who had been wary of the early Sufism of an elite, were mostly persuaded by the early twelfth century to accept the new Sufism of the masses, in conformity with populist principles, and to try to discipline it. Then with their acceptance, around the latter part of the twelfth century the reorganization of Sufism was completed with the

establishment of formal Sufi brotherhoods or orders (*tarīqah*)... The distinctive marks of the new Sufism were two: its organization into these formal 'orders' and its concentration on a formal method of mystical worship, the *dhikr*.⁸

In the thirteenth century, 'by the time of the Mongols', Lawrence Potter observes, 'Sufism had become a mass movement with organised brotherhoods. Sufism was undoubtedly appealing at a time of widespread insecurity when Islam itself was perceived to be in danger. Sufis, especially in rural areas, increasingly attracted people to a more personal and emotional form of the faith, as opposed to the urban-centred 'official' Islam represented by the ulama.'⁹

At the onset of the Mongol invasion, 'there was hardly a town or province in Iran devoid of Sufi groups', stresses Iran's foremost twentieth-century historian of Persian literature, Dhabīhu'llāh Safā. 'Countless *khānaqāhs* could be found throughout the land, inhabited by mystics who engaged in rigorous Sufi disciplines and ascetic exercises.'¹⁰ In the Ilkhanid period (1256–1335), in particular, 'the most significant religious development was the rapid spread of Sufi orders'.¹¹ As a result of this expansion, Sufism underwent a renaissance,¹² becoming the central spiritual tradition of Persianate Islam in general and of Muslim Persia in particular, until at least the mid-seventeenth century. Among the various Sufi lineages (*silsilas*) that flourished – including the Kāzīrūniyya, Qādiriyya, Yasīwiyya, Ni'matullāhiyya and Mawlawiyya – the three dominant Sufi orders were the Suhrawardiyya (western Persia), the Kubrawiyya (eastern Persia and Central Asia) and the Naqshbandiyya (Khorasan and Transoxiana).¹³ All the orders had their own lodges or meeting houses (*khānaqāhs*), which contributed to their impact on and diffusion throughout Persianate culture and society. A short survey of some of the key figures in the three major orders – the Suhrawardiyya, Kubrawiyya and Naqshbandiyya – will be useful here.

Although the Suhrawardiyya, founded by Abū'l-Najīb Suhrawardī (d. 564/1168), never spread much in central Iran, intellectually it was of great influence in Persia throughout the Mongol period.¹⁴ Its adherents included such great Akbarian mystics as 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 627/1329) and Sa'īd al-Farghānī (d. 700/1300), as well as the Persian poet Sa'dī (d. 692/1292). The order was extremely popular in Persianate India under such masters as Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multanī (d. 667/1268), master of the Persian poet 'Irāqī (d. 688/1289). Numerous *khānaqāhs* were established by Suhrawardī's followers during his lifetime, and immediately thereafter in India,¹⁵ where they were known for their close relations with political rulers, and acceptance of endowments from the state: these *khānaqāhs* were well-furnished, with individual rooms for dervishes and visitors, and an open kitchen serving meals at all times.¹⁶

The Kubrawiyya, founded by Najm al-Dīn Kubra from Khiva in Khwarazm (slain by the Mongols in 618/1221, during their onslaught on Transoxiana) was

the most dynamic Persian order of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹⁷ Scores of leading Sufis belonged to the order, which was responsible for its own school of theosophy. One of the most important of the Kubrawī Sufis was ‘Ala’ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1326), whose writings had a huge impact on ‘the intellectual development of Central Asian and Indian orders’.¹⁸ Simnānī (see Part II below) was largely responsible for creating a theosophical system with complex colour symbolism, based on subtle psychic centres of consciousness (*laṭā’if*),¹⁹ which systematised the thought of his master, Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī (d. 717/1317) and the theosophy of photisms, previously elaborated by Najm al-Dīn Kubra.²⁰ Among the other important figures in the Kubrawī school were Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256), author of *Mirsād al-‘Ibād*, the century’s most important Persian manual of Sufism²¹ and Abū’l-Mafākhir Yaḥyā Bākhrazī (d. 736/1335–36), author of an important work on dervish doctrine and etiquette, *Fusūs al-Ādāb*. Other luminaries included Sayf al-Dīn Bākhrazī (d. 658/1260), Bākhrazī’s grandfather and author of the *Waqā’i’ al-Khalwa*; and, finally, the most systematic and original esoteric thinker of the Kubrawī school: ‘Azīz-i Nasafī (d. between 681–700/1282–1300), a Sufi philosopher from Uzbekistan, who was the author of numerous treatises in Persian.²² Finally, there is Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī (d. 786/1385), a follower of Simnānī’s school, who established the Hamadānī line of the Kubrawiyya, whom legend credits with effecting the Islamisation of Kashmir.²³

In greater Persia, especially in Transoxiana and the eastern reaches of Khorasan, the Naqshbandiyya was best known for being the supreme Sufi order during the Timurid period, ultimately eclipsing the dominant influence of the Kubrawiyya in Central Asia.²⁴ The order, which has been traced back to its founder, Abū Ya’qūb Yūsuf Hamadānī (d. 535/1140), took its name from Bahā al-Dīn Naqshband of Bukhara (d. 791/1389). The most important fifteenth-century Naqshbandī master was Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā (d. 822/1419), a staunch advocate of the teachings and writings of Ibn ‘Arabī. The flowering of the order culminated with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), the greatest Persian classical poet of the fifteenth century, and his master, Khwāja Aḥrār (d. 896/1490),²⁵ who had numerous disciples throughout Transoxiana.²⁶

Regarding the precise socio-cultural significance of the Sufi renaissance of the Mongol, Timurid and Turkmen periods (roughly spanning the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries), there is little scholarly consensus.²⁷ Many still view Islamic mysticism in general – and in this case Sufism – as having had a negative and deleterious impact on the progress of religion, science and society: consequently, the rise of the Sufi orders during the Mongol period is often considered to be part of the social and cultural decline and material destruction that accompanied the Mongol invasion and subsequent Ilkhanid rule of Iran.²⁸ Others completely disagree on this point.²⁹ For example, in his chapter on ‘The Mongol Century’ in *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia’s Golden Age from the*

Arab Conquest to Tamerlane, S. Frederick Starr subtitles the section on religion ‘A Sufi Renaissance’,³⁰ noting that:

Nowhere was Sufism more popular than among the newly converted Turkic peoples who lived along the northern fringes of Central Asia. Not only did it conform more closely to the individualism of the nomads and former nomads, but it dovetailed nicely with many practices of their traditional shamanist religion and their worship of Tengri, the god of the Blue Sky. Over the century preceding the Mongol conquest the lands of northern Central Asia witnessed the appearance of many Sufi divines whose teachings shaped the practice of Islam down to the present.³¹

Starr concludes:

By the time of the Mongol invasion, Sufism had become the most powerful movement of thought in Central Asia ... When the armies of Chinggis Khan arrived in Central Asia, Yasawi, Kubra and other Sufi leaders has already experienced their visions of salvation, and their followers had begun the process of organizing and systematizing them. The number of their adepts and followers was growing rapidly. Whether they would eventually have been confronted by a counter-movement of rationalists or of legalistic and conservative Muslim clerics and scholars will never be known. For just at the moment when such a reaction might have occurred, the Mongol invasion threw the entire region into turmoil.³²

In a similar vein, Devin DeWeese argues that, despite ‘the destructiveness of Mongol rule with respect to the Muslim world and to Islam, it is clear that many Sufi communities proved particularly adept at exploiting the opportunities brought by Mongol rule – both before and after the Mongols in Ilkhanid Iran, the Golden Horde, and the Chaghatay *ulus* adopted Islam – to become significantly more prominent and influential, socially and politically, than they had been previously’.³³

The prevalence and catholicity of Sufism during the Mongol period undoubtedly had a number of positive social side effects. Faced with the barbarity of the Mongol onslaught, men of all walks of life found substantial existential consolation in the cultivation of Sufism.³⁴ It was ‘the wide vogue of mysticism, far more than formal theology, that enabled Islam to survive this appalling catastrophe’.³⁵ However, according to some scholars, the popular mass appeal of Sufism was also a precursor of its spiritual decline. In the following passage, Safā argues that the very popularity and consequent propagation of Sufism during the period led to its qualitative decline:

Despite the vast scale of killing, plunder, pillage, destruction, and unrest caused by the Turkish and Mongol invasion in thirteenth-century Iran, Persian Sufism during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries did not

become any less widespread nor lose any vigour. Although it continued to flourish, it is quite wrong to think that the Mongol invasion itself could have acted as a means for the strengthening and propagation of Sufism in Iran. Sufism was an intellectual movement which, in conjunction with religion and initiatory guidance, aimed at realising human perfection; so it is inconceivable that a government administered by Turkish, Tartar and Mongolian savages could ever become a means for its development or genuine advancement. All that was possible was that the misery, poverty, despair, displacement, and forced exile of the populace motivated some people to turn to the *khānaqāhs* and burden the Sufi masters and leaders with their traumatised conditions. And it is certainly the case that it was those very refugees who became instrumental in effecting the decline of Sufism that became visible at the end of the Mongol period and in later centuries.³⁶

Safā also adduces the rise of groups of antinomian Qalandar dervishes³⁷ during the Mongol period as further evidence of ‘that same decline [of Sufism] and a direct result of the socio-political calamity of the Mongol invasion’:³⁸

After having suffered the ravages of the Mongols, the refugees who flocked to the doors of the *khānaqāhs* facilitated the continuity of the teachings of the Sufi masters, which in turn strengthened the disaster-stricken followers’ belief in the efficacy of those masters. The Turks, Tartars and Mongols, who are crafty, deceitful, and, at the same time, fanatically bigoted races, upon conversion to Islam soon either fell under the influence of the Sufi shaykhs, or else for the sake of maintaining their kingdoms found it to their advantage to cater to the needs of the inhabitants of the *khānaqāhs* and seek their blessings. Albeit, this was one factor in ensuring the prevalence and propagation of Sufism in a formal sense at least.³⁹

However, because the Sufis’ overall concern was with the religious life and personal spiritual growth, invariably the outward material destruction and societal catastrophe of the Mongol conquest became viewed as at least as much – or even much more – as a religious event than a social or historical phenomenon.⁴⁰ Sufis’ responses, interpretations and explanations of the Mongol irruption were thus largely ‘penitential’ in nature.⁴¹ As Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256) observed a year after escaping from the Mongol sack of Ray in 618/1221, where his family was massacred, in his celebrated manual of Sufi discipline and doctrine, the *Mirsād al-Ibād*:

In this age only a few God-fearing leaders have survived to care for religion and respectfully call the attention of kings to the damage caused by unbelief, so that they might undertake its repair. It is therefore to be feared as a matter of course that the empty chatter concerning religion which is still heard from some mouths will disappear, and the whole

world will be submerged in the chatter of unbelief ... It is on account of these inauspicious circumstances that God Almighty has sent His wrath in the shape of the unbelieving Tartars, so that the reality of Islam having disappeared, He may also overturn the meaningless forms that remain.⁴²

Here, the Mongol invasion is seen as God's wrath, sent to chastise the Muslim world for the sins of wayward Muslims.⁴³

Dawlatshāh Samarqandī expresses a slightly different Sufi theological vision of the Mongol onslaught, which might be described as part of a 'theology of Khidrīan ineffability', in his fifteenth-century *Tadhkirat al-shu'arā*. Samarqandī's work relates an apocryphal account given by Khwārazmshāh Muhammad ibn Tikish to his son Jalāl al-Dīn. When al-Dīn asks his father why he fled before the Mongols' attack, but had not been afraid of fighting any other force up to that day, the Shāh responds: 'My son, you do not hear what I hear ... Every time I arrange my ranks for battle, I hear a group of the men of the unseen (*rijāl al-ghayb*) saying "O infidels, kill the evildoers!" (*ayyahā 'l-kafaratu 'qtulū 'l-fajārata*); fear and dread overcome me. Forgive me my son.' Dawlatshāh then explains:

And it is related by those to whom the hidden realities are unveiled (*asbāb-i kashf*) and by the saints of the faith (*buzurgān-i dīn*) that they saw the people of God (*rijālu 'llāh*) and the prophet Khidr in front of the army of Chingīz Khān, guiding that army. The discernment of the intelligent is struck dumb by this phenomenon and the wisdom of the wise is rendered weak by this fact; but 'God does what He wishes and commands what He wills.'⁴⁴

In this tale, the inability of human reason to explain the depredations of the Mongol conquests is symbolised by the immortal prophet Khidr, who enters the Land of Darkness in which the Water of Life can be found. All Khidr's acts described in the Qur'an (Q. 18: 60–82) are beyond the comprehension of ordinary reason, which is why he runs in front of the Mongol army, whose onslaught is similarly incomprehensible. Using a kind of medieval form of logotherapy,⁴⁵ Dawlatshāh's vision offers a theological exegesis on the Mongol phenomenon, aimed at comprehending the incredible evil of the Mongol invasion. The ineffable, inscrutable mystery of the Mongol onslaught thus only begins to make sense if considered as emanating from 'the realm beyond reason'⁴⁶ envisioned by the adepts of the Sufi hierarchy – of which Khidr is the supreme representative and symbol.⁴⁷

The same theosophical understanding of the depredations of tyrants, such as Chinggis Khan, Hülegü and Timur, is clearly enunciated in these verses from a ghazal by Hafiz. In this ghazal, the greatest Persian lyric poet of the fourteenth century extols the hidden might of the Sufi *rindān-i qalandars*, who can command whether temporal kingdoms be lost or won:

Around the tavern door
 desperado *qalandars* swarm:
 They withdraw and they bestow
 the diadems of Empire.
 Their pillow a brick, their foot
 upon the Pleiades set fast
 – What a hand of might is theirs,
 how glorious their place and circumstance!
Don't try to traverse this way
 without Khidr to guide you there
lest you get lost: the stage you'd reach
 is overcast in pitchblack darkness.
Dear heart, if once Poverty's Kingdom
 be granted you, the least of all
 your dominions will extend from
 earth's oceans up to the Empyrean.
 But if you know not the ways
 and means of Poverty, then don't
 forsake the privileges you possess
 and rank at court with Tūrānshāh.⁴⁸

It is ultimately these *qalandars* who, states Hafiz, hold 'power in their hands', have the 'hand of might' (*dast-i qudrat*), for their 'place and circumstance' constitute the highest office in the land (*mansab-i sāhib-jāhī*):

Their pillow a brick, their foot
 upon the Pleiades set fast
 – What a hand of might is theirs,
 how glorious their place and circumstance!

Hafiz is here clearly referring to the scope of the Sufi *qalandars*' power, sway and 'hand of might' in bestowing – or withdrawing – 'the diadems of Empire',⁴⁹ although the poet may also be alluding to the rank of 'commander' (*dast-i qudrat*) in the esoteric Ismaili hierarchy.⁵⁰ Although whether these lines are a prognostication or a reference to Dawlatshāh's tale, cited above, is unclear, the poet states that one cannot reach this station unless accompanied by the immortal prophet Khidr, who is beyond good and evil, and for whom neither material success or failure are of any import:

Don't try to traverse this way
 without Khidr to guide you there
 lest you get lost: the stage you'd reach
 is overcast in pitchblack darkness.

But even if the route one takes 'is overcast in pitchblack darkness', if graced with Khidr's guidance, one can reach the waystation (*marḥāla*) of 'Poverty's

Kingdom' (*sulṭānat-i faqr*) – that is, Sufism. From such a transcendent perspective, the fearsome conquests of a Timur appear ultimately insignificant because:

Dear heart, if once Poverty's Kingdom
 be granted you, the least of all
 your dominions will extend from
 earth's oceans up to the Empyrean.

There is no danger of losing one's way in the dark night of the material realm, for the Sufi mystic who has been vouchsafed Poverty's Kingdom. With Khidr's enlightened companionship and guidance, by grace of the immortal *communio sanctorum* of Sufi saintship (*walāya*), the 'garden ravaged' of material existence no longer appears as hopelessly desolate, but rather 'tills for the promise of a later birth / the wilderness of this Elysian earth'.⁵¹

The theosophical theory of the Kingdom of Spiritual Poverty (*sulṭānat-i faqr*) advocated in Hafiz's verse is carefully explained in the *Misbāḥ al-Hidāya*, a celebrated Persian manual of Sufi discipline and thought penned by the poet's younger contemporary 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Kāshānī (d. 734/1334):

Faqr (poverty) has a name (*ismī*), a practice (*rasmī*) and a reality (*ḥaqīqatī*). Its name denotes lack of property and possessions whilst still desirous of them; its practice denotes lack of property and possessions accompanied by ascetic abstinence from them, while its reality denotes the impossibility of having any property and possessions – because all such things are seen as being commandeered under ownership and possession of the King-of-kingdoms, so the possibility of attributing their possession to others is out of the question. The poverty (*faqr*) of such a mystic is an essential quality of his character, so that he suffers no change whether possessed or dispossessed of material goods. And if by chance the dominions of the entire world were to all fall under his command and control, he would still consider himself as independent and disassociated from their possession.⁵²

However, if one understands nothing of the rites of spiritual poverty (*faqr*) – that is, has no understanding of the Sufi way – then one might as well simply enjoy the temporal honours of the court of Tūrānshāh.⁵³

But if you know not the ways
 and means of Poverty, then don't
 forsake the privileges you possess
 and rank at court with Tūrānshāh.

Hafiz's point of view in this ghazal – and this was very much the medieval Sufi point of view as well – is clearly that no temporal monarch or temporary invader, such as Hülegü or Timur, ever really holds the reigns of power: the

true sovereign is always the mystic-monarch reigning in the ‘Kingdom of Spiritual Poverty’. Shāh Ni‘matullāh Valī (d. 834/1431), the chief Sufi master of the fifteenth century and founder of the Ni‘matullāhī Sufi order, uses the same term as Hafiz – *sulṭānat-i faqr* (‘poverty’s kingdom’) – to confirm the Sufis in their role as the unacknowledged legislators of the world:

Mā sulṭānat-i faqr bih ‘ālam nafurūshīm
Yik jur ‘a sharāb bih du sad Jam nafurūshīm
 Poverty’s holy kingdom’s not a realm
 I’d ever sell – for all the world;
 No – for ten-score kings, one single dram
 of vintage-wine, I’d never sell.⁵⁴

In another ghazal, Shāh Ni‘matullāh Valī rebukes Timur in quite explicit terms for vaunting his petty worldly conquests vis-à-vis the Sufi poet’s rulership of the kingdom of spiritual poverty:

Princeling – be gone, don’t flaunt your wealth –
 heap up no more hoards of silver and gold ...
 A world without end is my domain;
 yours but runs from China down to Shīrāz.⁵⁵

During both the Mongol and Timurid periods, the sovereignty (*dawlat*) of any worldly ruler, as Persian poets such as Hafiz and Shāh Ni‘matullāh espoused in verse and Sufi mystics adamantly believed, was always held to be subject to the spiritual authority (*walāyat*) of the Sufi saints. For this reason, the Sufis – those of the Kubrāwīyya Order in particular – generally considered the Mongol invasion of Khwarazm in the years 615/1218–620/1223, which resulted in ninety years of rule by non-Muslim ‘infidels’, as due in part to the misconduct towards the ‘Friends of God’ by the Muslim rulers.⁵⁶

Given the salience of institutional Sufism and the prevalence of Sufi *khānaqāhs* throughout greater Persia (see Part II below), the close ties that soon developed between the Mongol princes, their courts and military elites and the Sufi communities became evident in a number of other ways.

One way the ties were manifest was in the recurrent literary motif of the conversion of a Mongol ruler or notable to Islam by a Sufi shaykh.⁵⁷ There were a string of famous conversions of Mongols by Sufis. Berke (reg. 1257–67), the Mongol khan of the Golden Horde, embraced Islam under the guiding influence of the Kubrāwī Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (586/1190–659/1261), in his *khānaqāh* in Fath-Ābād in Bukhara.⁵⁸ Then, in 1295, Ghazan Khan converted to Islam, a conversion presided over by another Kubrāwī Shaykh: Sadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ḥamūya. A few years later, in 1303, Ghazan put himself through the discipline of the Sufis’ ‘forty-day retreat’ (*chilla*) under the supervision of a Sufi master (*pīr*), ‘during which he took little food, gave himself up to meditation, and was waited upon by the dervishes’.⁵⁹

Devin DeWeese draws attention to ‘the prevalence of narratives ascribing royal conversion to Sufi shaykhs, most of which date from the post-Mongol centuries’. Yet such hagiographic conversion narratives were never, I think, mere literary devices, but denoted the historical reality of the religious topography of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in which Sufi masters actually did play a leading role in the conversion of the Mongols.⁶⁰ Not only were the Sufis the main agents of the Mongols’ conversion to Islam, but, as Charles Melville has observed, they were its main beneficiaries.⁶¹ The closeness of the Mongol rulers and their viziers to the Sufis (which I have discussed elsewhere in copious detail)⁶² led, on the one hand, to the establishment of Islam on a Sufi foundation in Mongol Persia,⁶³ and, on the other, provided the inevitable socio-political currency through which the Sufis subsequently developed large-scale organisations.⁶⁴

Khānaqāhs and Sufi Poets in Mongol and Timurid Persia

The practices and mannerisms (*ādāb*) of Sufism were the mode of the day. The great number of *khānaqāhs* and Sufis and the patronage lavished by the Ilkhans and their viziers upon them and the receptive welcome given to ‘*khānaqāh*-Sufism’ (*tasawwuf-i khānaqāhī*) by people from every walk of society, as well as the existence of eminent mystics such as Shaykh Safī al-Dīn Ardabīlī and Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistarī, are central issues in any account of the history of Mongol Persia.⁶⁵

The construction of Sufi meeting lodges (*khānaqāhs*) throughout Iran had been going on since the time of Abū Sa‘īd ibn Abī’l-Khayr (d. 440/1048), who wrote the first rulebook for initiates into the institution.⁶⁶ By the ensuing (fifth/eleventh) century, *khānaqāhs* or similar houses of retreat for mystics existed in all the major towns in Khorasan and Persian Central Asia.⁶⁷ Throughout the twelfth century, the construction of *khānaqāhs* continued apace. Shaykh Aḥmad Jām (d. 536/1142), for example, constructed some ten *khānaqāhs* during his lifetime throughout this region.⁶⁸

The *khānaqāh* institution became even more important during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: that is, during the Mongol and Timurid periods, throughout Greater Persia.⁶⁹ As a formal religious institution prevalent in all public spaces, it often rivalled the mosque’s popularity,⁷⁰ and most of the Persian Sufi poets of the day were in one way or another affiliated to it. Lawrence Potter observes:

The increased attraction of Sufism is reflected in changing tastes in religious architecture, with the popularity of the *khānaqāh* at its height in the 14th century. From around the year 1300, following the precedent of Ghazan Khan and his vizier Rashid al-Din at Tabriz and Yazd, when *madrasas* or theological schools were built for the ulama, they were

often paired with *khānaqāhs*. When Ibn Battuta traveled through Iran in the 1330s, he could depend on finding *khānaqāhs* everywhere for accommodation.⁷¹ Ibn Yamin Faryumadi (d. 1368), the eulogist of several small Khorasani rulers, even criticises the excessive spending to embellish *khānaqāhs* in a poem. For Herat under the Karts, Allen has documented the existence of 12 *khānaqāhs* and 4 *madrasas*, whereas in the 15th century under the Timurids he has identified 14 *khānaqāhs* and 38 *madrasas*. A similar situation prevailed in Yazd, where fourteen *khānaqāhs* were built in the 14th century, as opposed to only four in the 15th century. The increased popularity of the *madrasa* in the 15th century seems to indicate that the ulama by then had overtaken the Sufis as the objects of patronage.⁷²

Potter adds:

In the post-Mongol period, shrines increasingly supplanted mosques as the main centers of religious activity. Between approximately 1305 and 1365, a number of important shrines were erected in Iran around the graves of Sufi saints, including those at Jam, Natanz, Pir-e Bakran, Ardebil and Bastam. In most cases, representatives of the Il-Khanid government cooperated with the Sufi community in building them. These shrines played an important role in the life of the local community: their domes were landmarks for travelers and pilgrims seeking the saint's intercession to solve their problems, and they became the venues of religious festivals, especially on the 'urs, or anniversary of the saint's death.⁷³

Muḥsin Kiyānī has provided extremely detailed information about the hundreds of *Khānaqāhs* that dotted the landscape of Greater Persia during the Mongol and Timurid periods. These belonged to diverse masters and orders throughout its different areas, including Khorasan (in the cities of Nishapur, Bistam, Kharaghan, Herat, Tus, Isfariyin, Gurgan, Faryab, Bukhara, etc.);⁷⁴ the region of Khwarazm,⁷⁵ Samarqand and suburbs;⁷⁶ and the provinces of Fars,⁷⁷ Yazd,⁷⁸ Kerman,⁷⁹ Hamadan,⁸⁰ Isfahan,⁸¹ Northern and Southern Azerbaijan⁸² and many others.

In the world of letters, the institution was extremely important, insofar as most of the major Persian poets of the Mongol and Timurid periods were affiliated to the *khānaqāh* institution – some were themselves proprietors of Sufi lodges. These include such eminent poets as Humām-i Tabrīzī (d. 714/1314), 'Imād Faqīh Kirmānī (d. 773/1371) and Kamāl Khujandī (d. 803/1400).⁸³

To better understand the *khānaqāh*'s place in the socio-political macrocosm of Persian society during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it will be illuminating to gaze into the mirror of the poetic microcosm that is the World of Letters, which reveals to us the connections between the *khānaqāh*

institution and Persian Sufi masters and poets. In the section below, I trace the *khānaqāh* affiliations of three major Sufi masters from Mongol and Timurid Persia, who were also minor poets: ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī, Amīn Baliyānī and Shāh Qāsim Anvār.

1. ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī (659/1261–736/1326)

Shaykh Rukn al-Dīn ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Biyābānakī Simnānī was one of the greatest Persian Sufi authors of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. He was born in the village of Biyabanak into a wealthy family of noble aristocrats from Simnān in northern Iran. His father, Malik Sharaf al-Dīn Simnānī, served as a vizier under various Mongol princes.⁸⁴ The poet was raised in luxury,⁸⁵ and, at age fifteen, was sent to be trained as a courtier under Arghūn Khān (reg. 1284–91). Although in this career he was initially successful, at the age of 24 whilst fighting among Arghūn’s cavalry on horseback in the vicinity of Qazvin during a battle in 683/1284 between the armies of Arghūn and that of Amīr Ilīnāq, the well-known army general of Sulṭān Muḥammad Takādār (Tegüder), Arghūn’s paternal uncle, ‘Alā’ al-Dawla had an ecstatic experience that led him to renounce his life as a courtier,⁸⁶ and ultimately resulted in his conversion to Sufism.⁸⁷ He eventually encountered his master in the person of Kubrawī Sufi Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī (639/1242–717/1317). He was initiated into Sufism by Sharaf al-Dīn Sa‘du’llāh al-Ḥanawyah, a disciple of Isfarāyīnī, in 685/1286.⁸⁸ Following his initiation, he underwent intense spiritual experiences.

In an effort to realise greater spiritual growth and achieve detachment from worldly preoccupations, ‘Alā al-Dawla resolved to follow the example of Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Adham of Balkh (d. c. 165/782), the prince of Khorasan who had renounced his kingdom and become a dervish. After having been a man of immense wealth and owner of many villages and estates, he accordingly donated much of his vast wealth and properties to religious charities, freed all his slaves, both male and female, and divorced his wife after providing a stipend for her to the end of her life. It took the ‘exalted man of the imperial state’ (as his sobriquet *‘Alā al-Dawla* can be translated) several years of struggle before his royal family and the Mongol state bureaucracy released him from their clutches.⁸⁹ He eventually managed to visit his master Isfarāyīnī in Baghdad, and continued to benefit from his spiritual guidance for the next few decades.⁹⁰

Having gained independence from domestic ties and political involvements, the shaykh, whom Isfarāyīnī had now granted permission to guide seekers, founded several *khānaqāhs*,⁹¹ and eventually established the major spiritual centre of his Kubrawī order in Simnān at a village he named: ‘Sufiville, God’s Own Windfall’ (*Sūfī-ābād-khudā-dād*).⁹² Although Simnānī remains admittedly a very minor poet, his centrality and stature as a leading Sufi master in the history of Sufism in Mongol Persia makes him unusually significant in the literary history of Iran. His ghazals on the whole were written to be sung in the

khānaqāhs that he founded.⁹³ The legend that Khwājū Kirmānī (d. 742/1342), one of Persia's foremost poets, may have been the compiler of Simnānī's *Dīvān*,⁹⁴ has augmented his fame. Khwājū was a formal initiatic affiliate and disciple of Shaykh Amīn Baliyānī (d. 745/1344), but he apparently spent some time with Simnānī in Sūfī-Ābād, during which time he is thought to have compiled his *Dīvān*.⁹⁵

2. Amīn Baliyānī (d. 745/1344)

Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Baliyānī was one of the major Sufi masters of fourteenth-century Persia. He was brought up in a dervish environment, constantly frequenting the *khānaqāh* administered by his father and uncle. At the age of fourteen, he was initiated into Sufism by his uncle Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn 'Abdu'llāh.⁹⁶ Following the death of his father in 693/1293, at age 24 he took over his position as director of the Order's *khānaqāh*. Maḥmūd ibn 'Uthmān, author of the famous hagiography of Shaykh Baliyānī, provides the following biographical account of Shaykh Amīn's spiritual prowess as a Sufi director:

Know that (may God have mercy on you) after the master [Shaykh Baliyānī] (may God sanctify his spirit) at age 14 experienced a spiritual opening [through initiation] on the Sufi Path ... By age 24 he had reached the degree of perfection (*kamāl*) and summoned people to God. By age 30, he had acquired disciples on the Sufi Path (*tarīqat*) who benefited from his graces ... By age 42, he had 40 dervish disciples, all passionately engaged adepts travelling the Way, sincerely detached from the accommodations of the material life (*sāhib-dard-i sālik-i sādiq-i mujarrad*), living in his *khānaqāh*, day and night undergoing spiritual retreats (*khalwat*) as men of the Way.⁹⁷

Baliyānī was known for his personal charm and charisma, and counted many mystics, scholars and poets among his followers; he seems to have been highly respected by members of all social classes. He also authored a *dīvān* of love-poetry (ghazals), the central motifs of which are erotocentrism, bold anti-clericalism, mystical anti-Sufism and romanticism, all of which reappear a few decades later in the ghazals of Hafiz (d. 1389), who was steeped in Baliyānī's Sufi teachings and overtly imitated him in several poems.⁹⁸

Baliyānī's best-known disciple was the abovementioned poet Khwājū Kirmānī (d. 742/1342), who constantly praised and extolled him in his verse.⁹⁹ Mu'in al-Dīn Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abī'l-Khayr Zarkūb Shīrāzī (d. 789/1387), renowned author of the *Shīrāz-Nāma*, was also a disciple of Baliyānī's.¹⁰⁰ Zarkūb Shīrāzī claims that Shaykh Baliyānī had disciples not only in Central Asia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but throughout China and the Far East as well.¹⁰¹

If Maḥmūd ibn 'Uthmān's *Miftāh al-Hidāya* is to be believed, many of the rulers of the province of Fars treated Shaykh Baliyānī with deference and humility, and, rather than viewing him as their subject, considered themselves

his disciples and venerated him as a great spiritual guide.¹⁰² He was also greatly respected by Sultān Abu Ishāq Īnjū (reg. 743/1343–753/1353) and most other members of the Injuid dynasty and aristocracy.¹⁰³

3. Shāh Qāsim-i Anwār (d. 837/1433)

One of the most accomplished and famous Sufi masters and poets of his century, Shāh Qāsim was born in Sarab, near Tabriz, in 757/1356. He spent his youth in Tabriz, where he was educated, and gained an ample grasp of all the main sciences of his day.¹⁰⁴ In his mid-teens, Shāh Qāsim was initiated into the Safāwiyya order by Shaykh Sadr al-Dīn Ardabīlī (son of Safī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, d. 735/1344). Evidently a spiritual prodigy,¹⁰⁵ within a few years, Sadr al-Dīn had bequeathed him the ‘robe of spiritual guidance’ (*khirqā-yi irshād*), dispatched him to Gilan, from there to Qazvin, and then to northern Khorasan. In 779/1377, at the age of only twenty-two, Shāh Qāsim took up residence at a *khānaqāh* in Herat, where he preached and propagated the teachings of the Safāwiyya order.¹⁰⁶ As Khwāndamīr comments of Qāsim-i Anwār in his *Habīb al-Siyar*: although Shāh Qāsim ‘went to Herat to train dervishes, in a short time most of the leaders and nobles of Khorasan had been enrolled among his disciples and resorted to his blessed threshold, morning, noon and night.’¹⁰⁷

With marvellous hyperbole, Dawlatshāh Samarqandī extols Shāh Qāsim’s mystical prowess:

He was a pearl from the ocean of Reality, an explorer of the plains of the Sufi Path, a falcon in the aetherial space of the Divine Nature (*lāhūt*), a gnostic of the terrestrial and celestial realms (*mulk va malākūt*). His blessed mind is a key to the treasures of Divine Wisdom, while the widely acclaimed miraculous eloquence of his speech is a treasure-trove of mysteries and subtleties.¹⁰⁸

The life and poetry of Shāh Qāsim-i Anwār, like that of many other Sufi poets and masters of the period – such as Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī (d. 810/1408), whose literary style, in the genre of the ‘gnostic ghazal’ (*ghazal-i ‘arīfāna*) closely resembles his¹⁰⁹ – was focused on the proselytisation of Sufism through the institution of the *khānaqāh*. He was the author of a *dīvān* of poetry, the largest part of which comprises ghazals (5376 verses), although other poetic genres such as *tarjī‘-band*, *marāthī*, *muqāta‘āt*, *rubā‘iyāt*, and *mathnawiyāt* are also included.¹¹⁰ Despite the frequent sarcastic jibes at the stock figure of the Sufi, the personification of a half-baked mystic, a depiction of Sufis found in almost all Persian poetry written during the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, the entire *dīvān* of Shāh Qāsim-i Anwār is clearly focused on the Sufi path (*ṭarīqat*) and concerned with *sulūk*, the ethical and spiritual progression of a Sufi wayfarer under the instruction of a master.

Because of his charismatic personality and the extreme popularity of his Sufi homilies delivered in Herat, Shāh Qāsim soon accrued scores of followers and devotees, which incited the jealousy of Shāh Rukh, who exiled him to

Samarqand. Yet there he also gained countless followers – including Ulugh Beg, Shāh Rukh's son.¹¹¹ Ultimately, he settled in another *khānaqāh* in Kharjird in Jam, where he died in 837/1433.¹¹²

From the above survey of the literary microcosm of the lives and works of three Sufi masters and poets who flourished during the Mongol and then Timurid periods, it is clear how pervasive and significant the *khānaqāh* institution was in the macrocosm of the wider society of Persia. According to my research, between 50–75% of the poets in Persia during these periods were Sufis, for whom the *khānaqāh* was the central focus of their spiritual lives and *khānaqāh*-based Sufi contemplative disciplines such as *sama'* and *dhikr* probably the key sources of inspiration for their poetry.¹¹³ For this reason, during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, aside from strictly court poetry, the lexicon of all Persian poetry becomes highly mystical and Sufistic in philosophical outlook, and employs Sufi imagery, ideas, symbolism and terminology.

The Sufi ghazal was originally composed to be sung by *qawwals* in *samā'* séances during which the Sufi mystics experience rapture and ecstasy. The practical function of both Persian Sufi *mathnawī* and ghazal verse, such as that composed by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, was liturgical.¹¹⁴ It is as difficult to imagine the existence of Sufi poetry without a *khānaqāh* for it to be sung in, as it is to read George Herbert's poems in *The Temple*, without recalling the intimate connection between his verse and his life as a seventeenth-century parson in the Church of England.¹¹⁵ Persian Sufi poetry itself would be inconceivable without a specific sacred space for its composition, reading, recital and vocal performance. That sacred space, during the Mongol and Timurid periods at least, was the *khānaqāh*.

The Mongol and Timurid periods represent the high-water mark of Sufi poetry in Persia. The huge number of Sufi texts, both prose and poetry, written in Persian, and the originality and breadth of their subject matter, are quite startling.¹¹⁶ Considering that the monumental art of Persia is poetry¹¹⁷ – poetry being 'to Iranian civilization what philosophy is to the Greek and prophecy is to the Judaic',¹¹⁸ – the *khānaqāh* was of the highest significance in the development of the spiritual and literary culture of Mongol and Timurid Persia. For, as can be extrapolated from the foregoing survey of *khānaqāhs* and Sufi poets in Mongol and Timurid Persia, many of the monuments of Persian Sufi poetry constructed during this period were mounted on the clay pedestal of the *khānaqāh* edifice.

Some Conclusions

A full century before the Mongol epoch, Sufism was memorably described by Marshall Hodgson as 'the institutionalized mass religion',¹¹⁹ of Central Persia, Khorasan and much of Central Asia, areas which 'became totally pervaded and dominated by the forms of Sufi piety'.¹²⁰ This efflorescence of the Sufi

tradition in Iran lasted well down into late Timurid and early Safavid times. By the late fifteenth century, during what has been called the 'Age of Shāh Rukh': 'mystical concepts, Sufi theoretical constructs and the theosophical doctrine of dervishhood (*mashrab-i darvīshī*) had permeated the entire socio-cultural milieu, so that one rarely encounters a poet or scholar in the annals of the age who did not 'enjoy the taste' of Sufi theosophy or who had not travelled a few steps along the Sufi Path'.¹²¹ The establishment of the Sufi orders in general and the vast network of *khānaqāhs*, in particular, were of central importance to the development of the religious topography of Persia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In medieval times, Persian Sufi poetry, music, and prose works of mystico-visionary metaphysics written by the great literary masters of '*irfān* and *tasawwuf*' abetted Sufism's popular appeal. Today, over five centuries later, Sufism still continues to exert its charm and make a significant intellectual and literary impact upon contemporary Persian society and spirituality, particularly in respect to four universal principles: (i) religious tolerance, (ii) religious diversity in light of ecumenical theomonism, (iii) antinomianism and anti-clericalism and (iv) the topos of the 'religion of love' (*madhhab-i 'ishq*).

(i) Religious Tolerance

The ethos of early Sufism was characterised by the virtues of humanity and tolerance. As Hodgson reminds us: 'The Sufi piety, tolerant of human weakness, did not generally separate itself from common beliefs and from the sensibilities of the common people; unlike the Manicheans, the Sufis were willing to accept as valid at least externally whatever religious notions they found among them.'¹²² One of the particularities of the Mongol period was the presence of 'greater freedom of speech and thought, accompanied by the open expression of ideas and beliefs'.¹²³ Religious tolerance has been earmarked by a number of scholars – Thomas Haining¹²⁴ and Jean-Paul Roux¹²⁵ in particular – as a fundamental characteristic of the Mongol religious outlook, an attitude equally cultivated among the Sufis of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, during which time, in Hodgson's words:

Sūfism became the framework within which all popular Muslim piety flowed together; its saints, dead and living, became the guarantors of the gentle and co-operative sides of social life ... It is probable that without the subtle leaven of the Sūfī orders, giving to Islam an inward personal thrust and to the Muslim community a sense of participation in a common spiritual venture quite apart from anyone's outward power, the mechanical arrangements of the Sharī'ah would not have maintained the loyalty essential to their effectiveness.¹²⁶

Hodgson furthermore emphasises that the popular appeal of Sufism was largely based on its esoteric understanding of religion:

[M]ore than their peers in any other cultural environment, the Sūfis succeeded in combining a spiritual elitism with a social populism – even though, to a considerable degree, at the expense of a certain vulgarization, beginning at the level of the dhikr recitations and extending out to the level of popular superstition ... [In this way] Sūfism provided a wide field of free development for the exceptional individual [and] a vehicle for expressing every aspect of popular piety within Islam.¹²⁷

In his study of religious tolerance among the Mongols, Jean-Paul Roux has demonstrated that there were five key qualities that characterised the religious policy of all the Turkish and Mongol peoples, exemplifying their basically tolerant attitude towards divergent faiths:

- i. the freedom to worship, offer religious instruction and apostleship
- ii. emphasis on the mutual cohabitation of religions and belief in their equal value
- iii. a liking for the organization of religious colloquies
- iv. veneration of the religious leaders of all faiths and belief in the efficacy of their prayers on behalf of the ruling sovereign
- v. belief in the placeless, immanent ubiquity of God over reverence for particular places of worship

Thus, it was tolerance, summarises Roux, ‘qui demeure l’attitude la plus évidente et la plus constante dans les Empires turco-mongols’.¹²⁸ Four out of five of the principles enumerated above (*viz.* i, ii, iv, v), we find advocated in verse in the *Garden of Mystery* of the Sufi poet Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. after 740/1339):

All infidelity has Faith inside;
 within each idol’s heart a soul resides
 and every heresy has hymns and litanies
 and daily, infidelity recites the rosary –
 ‘Verily, all which is, does hymn his praise.’
 So, where’s your enmity?
 In what I say – have I digressed or missed the Way?
 Say ‘ “God!” – and leave these fools in vanity and play.’
 Who else but God could gild its face
 or give an idol such finesse and grace?
 Unless it be his will, who’d be an idol’s votary?
 The Doer, Orator and Agent-actor too –
 all these were him. He acted not amiss, he spoke
 aright, and was in fact, both well and good.
 ‘See One, say One, know One:’ this axiom
 sums up the root and branches of *Imān*.

The Qur'an's word attests to this, not I alone
 confess to it: 'No fault exists,' the Scripture says,
 'in the creation of the All-Beneficent.'¹²⁹

The following verse by Hafiz – often cited as a *bon mot* to settle discussions about religious conflicts and diversity – provides an excellent summary of the Sufi ethos of tolerance:

Let's forgive the seventy-two sects for their ridiculous
 Wars and misbehaviours. Because they couldn't take in
 The path of truth, they took the road of moonshine.¹³⁰

(ii) *Religious Diversity in the Light of Ecumenical Theomonism*

Shabistarī's and Hafiz's verses cited above also constitute some of the most celebrated poetic expressions of the Sufi doctrine of comparative religion known as the 'Unity of Religions' (*waḥdat al-madhāhib*).¹³¹ Persian Sufi poets in their *dīvāns*, and Persian Sufi masters in *rasā'il* during the Mongol and Timurid periods, elaborated a sophisticated theosophy of the 'Unity of Being' (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and espoused a liberal-minded attitude towards religious diversity, based on the teachings of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240). Part of the heritage of the *waḥdat al-wujūd* school of Ibn 'Arabī is the evocation of an ecumenical consciousness at the heart of being itself, for, in reality, there is only One Being in which *haqq* ('Truth/Reality') is indistinct from *khalq* ('created temporal being'). Ibn 'Arabī's theocentricism involves 'a return to the One where the illusion of duality is permanently erased'.¹³² The Kubrāwī Sufi 'Azīz Nasaḥī (d. between 1282–1300), a follower of Ibn 'Arabī, describes the unitarian metaphysics of this school:

Know that for the people of unity (*ahl-i waḥdat*) that there is not more than one being (*wujūd*), and that this being is God Almighty, all-Holy, and that there is no other being besides God's being. The esoteric dimension (*bāṭin*) of this being is one Light, and it is this Light which is the soul of the world ... All vision, hearing, speech, usurpation, and sovereignty are but parts of this Light ... Even if all the (divine) Attributes, actions, and names are things composed of this Light, this Light is but one entity, constituting a unity of which the individual living creatures are only manifestations (*maẓāhir*).¹³³

Ibn 'Arabī's theomonist doctrine, in which God's being (*wujūd*) is – like light – a single reality with diverse manifestations, and being is viewed as a unitary reality composed of various luminous ontological levels, was all-pervasive among Sufis of the period. This oft-recited refrain from a *tarjī'band* by Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī, the greatest Sufi master of the Timurid period and a follower of Ibn 'Arabī's, celebrates this idea:

For the whole world and everything in it
Is but a reflection
of the image of the countenance of the Friend.¹³⁴

This spirit of ecumenical theomonism pervades the mythopoetic atmosphere of the entire Mongol and Timurid age. We can find its echoes in many Hafiz verses as well. This is a typical example:

In this matter of love, let's not put the Sufi gathering house
In this spot and the tavern in another; in every spot of the universe
Light shines out from the face of the Friend.¹³⁵

Even many of the fourteenth-century court poets, including the inimitably mellifluous Salmān Savājī (d. 778/1376), also versified the Sufi doctrine of religious pluralism, in which the differences between polytheism (the 'pagoda' or Hindu temple) and monotheism (represented by the symbol of the Ka'ba) appear insignificant in the all-encompassing sunshine of *wahdat al-madhāhib*:

Qibla u madhhab basī-ast, yār yikī bīsh nīst
Harkī dū'ī dar miyān dīd, yikī rā dū dīd
Kufr-i sar-i zulf-i tū'st, qibla ātash-parast
Dīd rukhat ki ātashī'ast, ātash az ān rū guzīd
Multifarious are all the creeds and sects
yet not more than one true faith exists;
whoever sees duality sees one as two.
The Mazdean heresy is her tresses' tip;
that's where they saw your flaming countenance
and so selected fire for their faith.¹³⁶

Out of the theomonist metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabī an extremely refined cosmopolitan and ecumenical approach to religious diversity soon developed amongst the Persian Sufis of the period, which had an immense international impact throughout the Persianate world. The 'Sufism of Ibn 'Arabī, which has informed Sufi theory from the late medieval period to the modern day, marks that point in the history of Islamic religion at which Islam reveals itself as a tradition which provides a bridge between East and West. The implications of *wahdat al-wujūd* for the overall interpretation of mystical experience align Ibn 'Arabī's mystical theory far more closely with traditions that spring from the Indian subcontinent (especially the Atman–Brahman identity of the *Upanishads*) than with the love traditions of the West'.¹³⁷ The 'Indian-style' Persian poet 'Urfī Shīrāzī (d. 1000/1591) beautifully encapsulates this ecumenical Sufi outlook on religious diversity in a famous verse:

The lover's drunk and senseless; he
Knows neither Islam or infidelity.
He's like a moth empassioned over fire

So one appears to him the burning pyre
 Outside the Hindu's pagoda
 Or candle burning in the Ka'ba.¹³⁸

(iii) *Antinomianism and Anti-clericalism*

Don't worry so much about the rogues and rakes,
 You high-minded Puritans. You know the sins of others
 Will not appear written on your own foreheads anyway.¹³⁹

The dominant social attitude among the Persian Sufi masters and poets was anti-clerical. Their verse is permeated by criticism of judges (*qazi*), lawyers (*faqih*), preachers (*wa'iz*), ascetics (*zahid*), spiritual advisors (*naseh*), Sufi shaykhs (*shaykh*), mosques and other religious centres and authority figures. Their criticism reflects Sufi opposition – prevalent mostly in the Persianate, rather than Arab, cultural sphere – to Islamic formalism, fundamentalism and puritanism.¹⁴⁰ Anti-clericalism is also largely what makes medieval Persian Sufi poetry still relevant – and not simply quaint, dated verse – to the Persianate cultures of today's Middle East afflicted by fundamentalist regimes.

Persian Sufi antinomian poetry was divided into three different genres: 'songs of infidelity' (*kufriyya*); and the two sub-genres: 'wild-man poetry' (*qalandariyyāt*)¹⁴¹ and 'Sufi-Zoroastrian symbolist verse' (*gabriyya*). The antinomian poets celebrate the inspired libertine (*rind*) who preaches a higher religion of love (*mazhab-e 'ishq*) based on Sufi *malāmatī* spirituality. They advocate a non-conformist bacchanalian piety in their struggle against Islamic zealotry and formalist hypocrisy. One of the key anti-clerical poets of the period,¹⁴² Amīn al-Dīn Baliyānī, describes the *malāmatī* celebration of the heresy of love (*kufī-i 'ishq*) (see below, iv.) as an esoteric spiritual principle counterbalancing exoteric sharī'a-centric Islam:

*Chūn dar nifāq u taswīr islām raft bar bād * kāfar shudan dar īn dīn*
īmān-i mā'st imshāb

Since Islam's gone to the dogs
 in quackery, chicanery and fraud,
 tonight dissent from such a creed
 is the faith that we profess.¹⁴³

Having discussed the antinomian and anti-clerical lexicon of the Persian Sufis of this period in detail elsewhere, no further elaboration on this theme need be given here.¹⁴⁴

(iv) *The Religion of Love*

The topos of the 'religion of love' received its supreme elaboration during the Mongol and Timurid periods, developing into the central tenet of later Sufi romanticism.¹⁴⁵ In Persian culture, doctrines of romanticism, eroticism and love

(both profane and sacred) are largely based on Sufi ethical ideals and expressed through the use of Sufi topoi. The religious tolerance and pluralism of the Mongol and Timurid periods was largely based on the transcendental ‘universal religion of love’ envisioned by the Sufis, which Hafiz encapsulates in a celebrated epigrammatic verse:

Whether we are drunk or sober, each of us is making
For the street of the Friend. The temple, the synagogue,
The church and the mosque are all houses of love.¹⁴⁶

The cosmopolitan Sufi vision regards a ‘religion of love’ as the universal faith of mankind,¹⁴⁷ a manifestation of the quintessence of all religious faith, above and beyond exoteric Islam. As Shāh Qāsim-i Anwār affirms:

In pagoda and mosque, in Ka‘ba and tavern,
The God of Love is the sole aim;
All the rest are just moonshine.¹⁴⁸

The chief epic romantic poet in Persian literature, Nizāmī of Ganja (who flourished just before the Mongol invasion and died in 598/1202) provides an excellent précis of the mystical spirit of the Sufi ‘religion of love’ in the following verses from his *Khusraw and Shīrīn*. Nizāmī describes love as the world’s *fons et origo*, man’s ultimate source of origin and final place of return (*asl va ma‘ād*), creation’s *causa causans* and the *anima mundi*.

Naught else but love’s my labour: that’s my logo;
So long as I’m alive, don’t offer me another motto.
All face towards love to supplicate in every
Temple under Heaven’s eye. The galaxy
Itself wouldn’t have an earth unless across
The surface Eros’ water coursed to save its face.
Become a slave to love! All righteous thought consists
Of this, for that’s the task of the heart’s adepts.
The cosmos *is* love in sum, and all the rest deceit;
Save *Amor*’s play, all else’s an idle game and sport.¹⁴⁹

Today, throughout the Persianate world, ideals of religious tolerance, informed by the theomonist Sufi vision of Islamic *tawhīd* and animated by the psycho-spirituality which regards Eros as *genetrix* of the universe, still remain an essential part of the piety of Iranian Islam, and inform the idea of Iran as a mystical vision of existence. In this regard, Hafiz remains Persia’s perennial spokesman for the eroticism of Persian culture. His verse homilies in praise of the religion of love will never go out of fashion:

Become a lover; if you don’t, one day the affairs of the world
Will come to an end, and you’ll never have had even
One glimpse of the purpose of the workings of space and time.¹⁵⁰

Notes:

† Deceased Agust 2018.

1. These include Alessandro Bausani's numerous writings, but in the present context, his 'Religion under the Mongols', in J. A. Boyle, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968) is the most important; Michael Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam: And the Riddle of Bihzad of Herat (1465–1535)* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012); Henry Corbin, *En Islam Iranien: Aspects Spirituels et Philosophiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), vol. 2; Devin DeWeese, *Studies on Sufism in Central Asia* (London: Routledge, 2012); Qāsim Ghanī, *Baḥṭh dar āthār va afkār va aḥwāl-i Hāfiz: Tārīkh-i tasawwuf dar islām az sadr-i islām tā 'asr-i Hāfiz*. 3rd edn, 2 vols (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Zawwār, 1383/2004); Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1974–77), vol. 2; 'Alī Rajā'ī Bukhārā'ī, *Farhang-i ash'ār-i Hāfiz* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī, 1364/1985); Muḥammad 'Alī Tarbiyat, *Dānishmandān-i 'Adharbāyjan*, 2 vols (Tehran: Kitānkhanā Furūtanī Tabriz 1314/1935); Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr, *Tārīkh-i Tabriz ta pāyān-i qarn nuhum-i hijrī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman-i Āthār-i millī, 1973); Leonard Lewisohn, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. 2: *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150–1500)* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999); John Limbert, *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); Shahrokh Meskoob, *Iranian National Identity and the Persian Language (900–1900): The Roles of Court, Religion, and Sufism in Persian Prose Writing*, transl. M. Hillmann (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1992); 'Abd al-Husayn Zarrīnkūb, *Justujū'ī dar tasawwuf-i Irān* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1357/1978); Zarrīnkūb, *Dunbala-yi Justujū-yi dar tasawwuf-i Irān* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1362/1983); Zarrīnkūb, *Az kūcha-i rindān: dar-bāra-i zindagī va andīsha-i Hāfiz* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1356 Shahanshahi/1977). Reference below will also be made to my earlier study of Sufism in the early fourteenth century, which concerned relations between the Mongol princes, military authorities and the Sufis. See Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari* (London: Curzon, 1995), Chapter 3, 'The Political Milieu of Mongol Persia'.
2. See Manūchīhr Murtaḍawī, *Masā'il-i 'asr-i Īl-khānān* (Tehran: Bunyad-i Mūqūfāt-i Dr. Maḥmūd Afshār 1385/2006); J. A. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, J. A. Boyle, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); see also Alā al-Dīn 'Atā Malik Juwaynī, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, transl. Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958); and Boyle, *The Mongol World-Empire 1266–1370* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977). As Michel Mazzaoui notes: 'The whole question of Sūfism or mysticism during the Mongol period has not been studied in full, and our knowledge about folk Islam during this period and afterwards is very sketchy.' See Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safawids: Šī'ism, Sūfism and the Gulāt* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1972), p. 42.
3. For the social and political history of the period, key sources include: I. P. Petrushevsky, 'The Socio-Economic Conditions of Iran under the Īl-Khāns', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); B. Spuler, *History of the Mongols, Based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, transl. Stuart and Helga Drummond (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History c. 1071–1330*, transl. J. Jones-Williams (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972);

- Allesandro Bausani, *The Persians: From the Earliest Days to the Twentieth Century*, transl. J. Donne (New York: St Martin's, 1971); Charles Melville and Peter Jackson, 'Abū Sa'īd Bahādur Khān', *Encyclopedia Iranica* vol. I; Melville and Jackson, 'Arkhūn Khan', *Encyclopedia Iranica* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), vol. II; Melville and Jackson, 'Aḥmad Takūdār', *Encyclopedia Iranica* vol. I; Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World-System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); David Morgan, *Medieval Persia 1047–1797* (London: Longman, 1988).
4. S. H. Nasr, 'Spiritual Movements, Philosophy and Theology in the Safavid Period', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. vi; Lawrence G. Potter, 'Sufis and Sultans in Post-Mongol Iran', *Iranian Studies* XXVII: 1/4 (1994). See especially pp. 77–9.
 5. For a lengthier study of this revival, see my overview in Lewisohn, *Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism*, pp. 33–6.
 6. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 211.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Ibid.
 9. Potter, 'Sufis and Sultans', p. 78. For an overview of the later immense geographical spread of the Sufi orders during the Mongol, Timurid and Turkmen periods (prior to the advent of the Safavids in 1501), throughout Greater Persia, Seljuq Anatolia, Central Asia and India, see the map: 'Spread of the Main Sufi Orders Circa 1500, with the Shrines of Founding Saints of Leading Orders', in Sally MacEachern, ed., *The New Cultural Atlas of the Islamic World* (London: Brown Reference Group, 2009), pp. 38–9.
 10. Dhabīḥu'llāh Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt-i Īrān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Firdaws, 1373/1994), 13th edn, III/1, p. 165.
 11. Potter, 'Sufis and Sultans', p. 78.
 12. Ehsan Yarshater, *Shi'r-i fārsī dar 'ahd-i Shāh Rukh* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Danishgāh, 1334/1955), p. 19.
 13. Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt-i Īrān*, III/1, p. 165; Bausani, 'Religion Under the Mongols', p. 545.
 14. See Erik Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
 15. S. Babs Mala, 'The Sufi Convent and its Social Significance in the Medieval Period of Islam', *Islamic Culture* (1977), p. 38.
 16. Mala, 'The Sufi Convent', p. 41.
 17. See Muhammad Isa Waley, 'Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and the Central Asian School of Sufism', in S. H. Nasr, ed., *Islamic Spirituality*, vol. 2: *Manifestations* (New York: Crossroad, 1991); J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 55–8.
 18. Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, p. 57.
 19. See Jamal Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of 'Alā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1995).
 20. 'Najm al-Dīn Kubrā', pp. 85–8; Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, transl. Nancy Pearson (London/Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1978).
 21. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, *Mirsād al-'ibād min al-mabdā' ilā 'l-ma'ād*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāhī, 2nd edn (Tehran: Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī va Farhangī, 1365/1986).
 22. Lloyd Ridgeon, *Azīz Nasafī* (Richmond: Curzon, 1998); 'Azīz-i Nasafī, *Biyyān al-tanzīl*, ed. Sayyid 'Alī Asghar Mīrbāqirī-fard, English introduction by Hermann Landolt (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār va Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1379/2000).
 23. Devin DeWeese, 'Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī and Kubrawī Hagiographical Traditions', in L. Lewisohn, *The Heritage of Sufism*.

24. Devin DeWeese, 'The Eclipse of the Kubravīyah in Central Asia', *Iranian Studies* XXI: 1–2 (1988).
25. 'Ārif Nawshāhī, ed., *Aḥwāl va suḵhanān-i Khwāja 'Ubaydu'llāh Aḥrār* (Tehran: Markaz- Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1380/2001).
26. Hamid Algar, 'Naḵshbandiyya. 1. In Persia', *An Economic Islamicity Index* (EI2), vol. 7.
27. See Lewisohn, 'Sociocultural Causes of the Medieval Sufi Renaissance', in 'Overview: Iranian Islam and Persianate Sufism', in Lewisohn, *Heritage of Sufism*, in which I suggest several reasons for this renaissance.
28. Alessandro Bausani remarks that 'the destructive invasions from Central Asia (Chinggis Khan in the thirteenth and Timur in the fourteenth centuries) suffocated every germ of Renaissance and re-included Iran in vast but unproductive supernatural Empires'. See Bausani, 'Muḥammad or Darius? The Elements and Basis of Iranian Culture', in S. Vyrionis Jr., ed., *Islam and Cultural Change in the Middle Ages* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975), p. 46. Speaking of the 'decline' of Sufism in this period, Shahrukh Meskoob writes: 'From the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that is, during the Mongol and Timurid ages, the social situation of Sufis in Iran changed. From a spiritual organisation based on sensual experience, it turned into a powerful social organisation, with institutions and property and endowed foundations in communication with the authorities and rulers, the bands of disciples and monastery dwellers hired and mobilised to participate in local disputes and conflicts ... Moreover, the domination of the Mongols and the Timurids led the people to despair of society and to adopt pseudo-Sufism and boosted the market for this. In any case, whatever the causes, it is true that in this period, on account of the gullibility and simplicity of the people at large, the fake asceticism, hypocrisy, and spiritual profiteering enjoyed considerable success, both among Sufis and among religious scholars.' See *Iranian National Identity*, p. 178. For a largely ill-informed evaluation of Sufism and its impact on post-Mongol Persia, see Abbas Edalat, 'Trauma Hypothesis: The Enduring Legacy of the Mongol Catastrophe on the Political, Social and Scientific History of Iran', accessed on 21 July 2017, at researchgate.net.
29. For a positive perspective on Sufism's effect on medieval Muslim society, see Fritz Meier, 'Soufisme et Déclin Culturel', *Classicisme et Déclin Culturel dans l'Histoire de l'Islam: Actes du Symposium International d'Histoire de la Civilisation Musulmane* (Paris: Besson, 1957).
30. See S. Frederick Starr, *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 439–43.
31. Starr, *Lost Enlightenment*, p. 439. Starr's view that Shamanistic religion dovetailed with Sufism is accepted by some scholars. See Charles Melville, 'Pādishāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān', in C. Melville, ed., *Pembroke Papers I: Persian and Islamic Studies in honour of P. W. Avery* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990), p. 168. This view is contested by others. See, for example, Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 42: 1 (1999), p. 38.
32. Starr, *Lost Enlightenment*, p. 443.
33. Devin DeWeese, '“Stuck in the Throat of Chingīz Khān”: Envisioning the Mongol Conquests in Some Sufi Accounts from the 14th to 17th Centuries', in Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh Quinn, eds, *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 23. For a further study of relations between

- Mongols and Sufis, see Pfeiffer and Quinn, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).
34. See Manūchihr Murtaḍawī, *Masā'il-i 'asr-i Īlkhānān*, pp. 311–50.
 35. A. J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 16. 'Alī Rajā'ī Bukhārā'ī thus observes: 'The Persian writer of the twelfth and especially the thirteenth century has witnessed his house burned down, his city destroyed, his beloved relatives murdered, his independence eradicated. Foreigners control his possessions, his property, his very being. In such circumstances, how can one sing songs of joy or compose rhapsodies? How should the world be thought a happy abode, or life seem sweet? Thus the poetry of this period and the following century (eighth Muslim/fourteenth Christian century) – composed as it was by writers subjected to savage marauding Mongols and plundering Turks – is little more than an attempt to offer condolences to the reader. Yet, in the midst of this pessimism, anxiety, despair, apathy, political corruption and psychological terror, Sufism seemed to be the sole force capable of saving the soul of the Iranian populace, casting a ray of hope and courage into the traumatised hearts of the inhabitants of mediaeval Persia. For the Sufi masters promised the people – in the safety of Sufism – liberation from aggravation by their corrupt contemporaries, offering as companions individuals of refined and sensitive feelings instead of blackguards and tyrants. They allowed their followers to pass their days without trouble in their *khānaqāhs*, engaged in musical concerts and dance, states of rapture and spiritual feelings.' See Bukhārā'ī, *Farhang-i ash'ār-i Hāfiz*, pp. 454–5.
 36. Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt-i Īrān*, III/1, p. 166.
 37. For extensive coverage of the Qalandariyya in the Mongol era, see Muḥammad Ridā Shafī'ī-Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya dar tārikh* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sukhan, 1384/2005), pp. 89–92. For a good overview of the movement in the Middle East and Iran, see Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), pp. 52–9.
 38. Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt-i Īrān*, III/1, p. 166.
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
 40. See DeWeese, "'Stuck in the Throat of Chingīz Khān'", p. 25.
 41. *Ibid.*
 42. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, *Mirsād al-'ibād*. See Hamid Algar, transl., *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (Delmar, NY: Caravan, 1982), pp. 382–3. See my discussion of this passage in Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, pp. 57–8.
 43. See DeWeese, "'Stuck in the Throat of Chingīz Khān'", p. 27.
 44. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.
 45. See Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning* (New York: Perseus, 1997) on this term in psychiatry.
 46. Ibn 'Arabī relates this realm to the science of mysteries: 'The third degree is the sciences of mysteries (*'ulūm al-asrār*), which is a type of lore "beyond the stage of reason" (*al-'ilm al-adhī fawq al-tawr al-'aql*), that derives from the divine breath of inspiration conveyed through the Holy Spirit to the (human) spirit (*'ilm naḥfih rūḥ al-quds fī al-rūḥ*).' See Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1: 31, pp. 8–25. This science is the last of a triad, according to the Shaykh al-Akbar: the first is rational science (*'ilm al-'aql*), the second is 'the science of mystical states (*'ilm al-aḥwāl*), to which no way exists except by intuitive sapiential "taste" (*dhawq*).' (My translation). See also William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY, 1989), p. 169.
 47. On the trans-rational nature of Khidriān consciousness in Sufi theology, see

- Lewisohn, 'From the "Moses of Reason" to the "Khidr of the Resurrection": The Oxymeronic Transcendent in Shahrastani's *Majlis-i Maktub ... dar Khwarazm*', in Omar Ali-de-Unzaga, ed., *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary* (London: I.B. Tauris/Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011).
48. Parvīz Nātil Khānlārī, ed., *Dīwān-i Khwāja Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiz*, (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khawārazmī, 1359/1980), ghazal 479.
 49. Muhammad Ridā Shafī'ī-Kadkanī interprets these verses (3 and 4) simply as the poet's 'smashing of the taboo of political authority (*sultānat*) and subversion of the material powers of his day and age'. See Shafī'ī-Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya dar tārikh* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sukhan, 1386/2007), p. 336. Although correct overall, this observation ignores the fact that the poet is clearly celebrating the immortal and transcendent Sufi 'realm and kingdom of spiritual poverty' (*sultānat-i faqr*: see verse 7), which is, as Ḥāfiz elsewhere remarks: 'that kingdom that need never mourn its downfall, [which] is – to put it plainly – the dominion of the dervishes [*dawlat-i darvishān*]'. See Ḥāfiz, *Dīwān*, ghazal 50, line 7.
 50. The term *dast-i qudrat* ('hand of might') used by Ḥāfiz here is also a technical term particular to the Ismaili hierarchy of the Alamut period. Among the Ismailis of Alamut, when the imam assumes political power (*da'wat-i fi'lī*), he appoints a commander to organise the affairs of the community in a formal manner. The 'hand of might' is thus a symbolic expression denoting the head of the army, or a person of his calibre (Jalāl Badakhchani, personal communication). In his *Paradise of Submission*, Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī provides the following theological explanation of this term: 'The function of the *dast-i qudrat* (hand of might) is that, when the gate of repentance becomes closed, that is, when the Imam desists from spreading his mission through his own words (*da'wat-i qawli*), he is put in charge and appointed as commander so that he may organise the affairs of the community in a concrete manner (*siyāsāt-i shaklī*) ... The *dast-i qudrat* has been likened to fire which, just as it incinerates itself, also consumes, scatters and destroys everything else in its path, that is, it strikes and kills, and so on.' See S. J. Badakhchani, transl., *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought: A New Persian Edition and English Translation of Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī's Rawda-yi taslīm* (London: I.B. Tauris/Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), p. 132.
 51. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Epipsychidion* (London: Charles & James Ollier, 1820–21), verses 186–9.
 52. 'Izz al-Dīn Mahmūd Kāshānī, *Misbāḥ al-ḥidāya*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī, 2nd edn (Tehran: Kitābkhāna Sanā'ī, 1946), p. 375. Cited by Bahā' al-Dīn Khurramshāhī. See al-Dīn Khurramshāhī, *Ḥāfiz-nāma: sharḥ-i alfāz, i'lām, mafāḥīm-i kilīdī va abyāt-i dushvār-i Ḥāfiz* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Surūsh, 1372/1993), vol. 1, p. 265.
 53. Jalāl al-Dīn Tūrānshāh was the vizier of Shāh Shujā' from 1365–84.
 54. Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī, *Kullīyyāt-i ash'ār-i Shāh Ni'matu'llāh Walī*, ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khāniqāh-i Ni'matullāhī, 1361/1982), ghazal 1177, p. 541.
 55. Ni'matullāh Walī, *Kullīyyāt*, ghazal 900, p. 412. For a good discussion of the poet's relations with Timur, see Terry Graham, 'Shāh Ni'matullāh: Founder of the Ni'matullāhī Sufi Order', in Leonard Lewisohn, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism*. For this ghazal, see *ibid.*, p. 183.
 56. For further discussion of this, see Lewisohn, 'Overview' in *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. II, pp. 30–1, and the various sources cited there. As Simon Digby points out: 'The territorial *wilāyat* of the Sufi shaykh was considered as having a direct influence on the political events and material destiny of the realm over which it was exercised ... The corollary of the belief that an offence against a Sufi

- shaykh will lead to the downfall of a ruler, is the belief that such shaykhs also have had the power to bestow kingship upon individuals whom they encountered, or to foresee the attainment of a throne by such men.' See 'The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India', *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* XXVIII (1990), pp. 71, 75.
57. DeWeese, "Stuck in the Throat of Chingiz Khān", p. 23.
 58. See J. Richard, 'La Conversion de Berke et les Debuts de l'Islamisation de la Horde d'Or', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 35 (1967), pp. 173–9.
 59. Henry Hoyle Howorth, *History of the Mongols* (London: Longmans & Green, 1876–1927), vol. 3, p. 480. For a further discussion of Ghazān and Sufism, see Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, pp. 71ff.
 60. DeWeese points this out elsewhere: 'What seems clear is that conversion by Sufi shaykhs becomes the typical 'historical' paradigm for recounting conversion to Islam in the inner Asian world from the Mongol era on; while this may reflect a 'literary' development, the literary development itself reflects a new *religious* development in which Sufis are linked with conversion in popular consciousness, which in turn must reflect to some degree a historical reality of an increased Sufi role in serving as the "bearers" of Islam in infidel environments.' See Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 137.
 61. Charles Melville observes: 'The charisma of individual Sufi shaiikhs, such as Jalal al-Din Rumi, Qutb al-Din Shirazi, 'Ala' al-Daula Simnani, and Safi al-Din Ardabili, made them influential in ruling circles. Moreover, the size of their popular following – not least among the Turko-Mongol tribesmen who constituted the military power of the Ilkhanate – and their increasing readiness to champion the rights of the people against the authorities made the shaykhs a potent force that it was impolitic to ignore. Shaykh Safi al-Din (d. 1334), the ancestor of the Safavid dynasty that would rule Iran from 1501 to 1722, was courted by all three of the last Ilkhans.' See 'The Mongols in Iran', in Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New Haven/New York: Yale University Press/Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), esp. pp. 57–8.
 62. See Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, pp. 55–103.
 63. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–4.
 64. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 138.
 65. Manūchihir Murtaḍawī, *Masā'il-i 'asr-i Il-khānān*, p. 322. For the Mongol's patronage of Sufism, see the lengthy discussion in Aḥmad Rajā'ī, *Farhang-i ash'ār-i Hāfiz* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī 1364/1985), 2nd edn, pp. 465–8, where he notes that 'the strongest patrons of the eighth [fourteenth]-century Sufis were the Il-Khānid Mongols' (p. 465).
 66. Terry Graham, 'Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l-Khayr and the School of Khurāsān', in L. Lewisohn, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism, I: Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), especially pp. 121–6, on the *khānaqāh*. See also Muḥammad Shafī'ī Kadkanī's extended discussion of Abū Sa'īd's role in the development of the *khānaqāh*'s rules in Shafī'ī Kadkanī, ed. *Asrār al-tawḥīd* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Āgāh, 1376/1997), vol. 1, pp. 133–8. Also see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 241; Muhsin Kiyānī, *Tārīkh-i khānaqāh dar Irān* (Tehran: Tahūrī, 1369/1991), pp. 187–90.
 67. In many early classical Persian Sufi sources, such as the *Asrār al-tawḥīd* of Ibn al-Munawwar, Hujwiri's *Kashf al-maḥjūb* and 'Attār's *Tadhkirat al-awliyā*, four

- different terms are used practically interchangeably to denote the meeting-houses of the first Sufi fraternities: *khānaqāh*, *ribāṭ*, *sūma'a* and *zāwiya*. See Aḥmad Rajā'ī, *Farhang-i ash'ār-i Hāfiz*, p. 163. Nonetheless, subtle differences in the usage of such terms can sometimes be discerned: *khānaqāh*, for instance, generally denoted a vast complex of buildings used by the Sufis; while *zāwiya* usually implied a cell or chamber, inhabited by the individual dervish within that complex (see *ibid.*, pp. 164–5). For an extended discussion of the philology of the term, see M. Kiyānī, *Tārīkh-i khānaqāh dar Irān* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna Ṭahūrī, 1369/1990), pp. 55–64. On the early history of the institution in Khorasan, see Jacqueline Chabbi, 'Remarques sur le Développement Historique des Mouvements Ascétiques et Mystiques au Khurasan', *Studia Islamica* 46 (1977) and Margaret Malamud, 'Sufi Organizations and Structures of Authority in Medieval Nishapur', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26: 3 (1994).
68. Kiyānī, *Tārīkh-i khānaqāh dar Irān*, pp. 191–2.
 69. *Ibid.*, pp. 201ff.
 70. On the prevalence of this institution (with numerous examples) during the Mongol rule of Persia, see Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, pp. 106–20.
 71. For example, he stayed at *khānaqāhs* in Bukhara, Termez, Balkh and Nishapur. See Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354*, transl. H. A. R. Gibb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1971), vol. 3, pp. 554, 570, 573, 584. Cited in Potter, 'Sufis and Sultans', p. 79, n. 9.
 72. Potter, 'Sufis and Sultans', p. 79.
 73. *Ibid.*, pp. 78–9. See also Lisa Golombek, 'The Cult of Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Fourteenth Century', in D. K. Kouymjian, ed., *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1974), pp. 419–30.
 74. Kiyānī, *Tārīkh-i khānaqāh dar Irān*, pp. 190–5.
 75. *Ibid.*, pp. 196–7.
 76. *Ibid.*, pp. 197–99.
 77. *Ibid.*, pp. 206–18.
 78. *Ibid.*, pp. 219–25.
 79. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–8.
 80. *Ibid.*, pp. 237–8.
 81. *Ibid.*, pp. 240–2.
 82. *Ibid.*, pp. 229–34.
 83. See Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, pp. 106–20; Lewisohn, 'Humām-i Tabrīzī', in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd edn; Lewisohn, 'The Life and Times of Kamal Khujandī', in Maria Subtelny, ed., 'Annemarie Schimmel Festschrift', *Journal of Turkish Studies* 18 (1994).
 84. Simnānī's father was an official at the court of first Arghūn and later Ghazan Khan, and was subsequently (in 694/1288) promoted to the post of *ṣaḥīb-i dīvān* (minister of finance and civil administration) of Iraq. See J. Van Ess, 'Alā' al-Dawla Semnānī', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. I, p. 774; N. M. Harawī, 'Introduction', in 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī, *Al'Urwat li'l-ahl al-khalwat wa'l-jalwat*, ed. N. M. Harawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1362/1983), p. 26.
 85. Jamal Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of 'Alā' al-Dawla as-Simnānī* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1995), p. 1.
 86. This episode is discussed in L. Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari*. (London: Curzon, 1995), pp. 63–4. See also Mohammad Javad Shams, 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī', in *Encyclopedia Islamica*, vol. III; Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God*, pp. 18–19; Devin DeWeese, 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī's Religious Encounters at the Mongol Court Near

- Tabriz', in Judith Pfeiffer, ed., *Politics, Patronage and Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
87. Since accounts of Simnānī's life, Sufism, theosophical views and biography are numerous, a short synopsis need only be offered here. Monographs on Simnānī's Sufi thought include: Mitham Nasru'llāhī, *Barrasī-yi āra va andīshahā-yi 'irfānī-yi Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī* (Tehran: Nashr-i Adyān, 1391/2012), and Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God*. Encyclopedia lemmata and articles in journals on Simnānī are cited in notes below.
 88. Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God*, p. 23; J. Van Ess, "'Alā'-al-Dawla Semnānī", p. 774. Both these accounts are based on Simnānī's own narrative in his *Al-'Urwat li'l-ahl al-khalwat wa'l-jalwat*, ed. N. M. Harawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1362/1983), pp. 296ff.
 89. For Simnānī's own extended account of his conversion to Sufism, see his *Al-'Urwat li'l-ahl al-khalwat wa'l-jalwat*, pp. 296–301; and the autobiographical account in his *Risāla-yi Faṭḥ al-mubīn li-ahl al-yaqīn* in W. M. Thackston, Jr., ed., *'Alā'uddawla Simnānī: Opera Minora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 117–20.
 90. Dhabīhu'llāh Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt-i Īrān*, III: 2, pp. 803–4. On his relation to Isfarāyīnī, see Hermann Landolt, ed., *Correspondance spirituelle échangeées entre Nūroddīn Esfarāyēnī et son disciple Alā'oddawleh Semnānī* (Tehran: Bibliothèque Iranienne, XXI, 1972) and the introduction to Hermann Landolt, ed., *Nuruddīn Isfarayini: Le Reveleateur des Mystères: Traité de Soufisme* (Paris: Verdier, 1986).
 91. Van Ess, "'Alā'-al-Dawla Semnānī", p. 775.
 92. Shams, "'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī", pp. 430–1.
 93. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Bāstānī-Pārizī, *Bārgāh-i khānaqāh dar kavīr-i haft kāsa* (Tehran: Nashr-'Ilm, 1384/2005), p. 487.
 94. Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt-i Īrān*, III: 2, p. 809.
 95. See Nasru'llāhī, *Barrasī-yi āra... Simnānī* p. 53, n. 2; Jalīl Misgarnizhād, 'Sayr-i mafāhīm-i 'irfānī dar andīsha-yi Khwājū', in *Nakhlband-i shu'arā: Majmū'a-ye maqālāt-i kungira-ye jahānī Khwājū-ye Kirmānī*, ed. Aḥmad Amīrī Khurāsānī (Kerman: Intishārāt-i Markaz-i Kirmān-shināsī, 1379/2000), vol. 2, p. 1161, referenced in Muḥammad Mu'īn, *Hāfiz-i shūrīn-sukhan*, ed. Mahdūkt Mu'īn (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mahārat, 1389/2010), 5th reprint, p. 302.
 96. See Kāvūs Ḥasanlī and Muḥammad Barakat, eds, *Divān-i ash'ār-i Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Muḥammad Baliyānī* (Tehran: Farhangistān-e Hunar, 1387/2008), pp. 7–8; Maḥmūd ibn 'Uthmān, *Miftāḥ al-hidāya wa misbāḥ al-'ināya: Sīrat-nāma-i Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Muḥammad Baliyānī*, d. 745 [1344], ed. 'Imād al-Dīn Shaykh al-Ḥukamā'ī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Rawzana, 1376/1997), pp. vii–viii.
 97. 'Uthmān, *Miftāḥ*, pp. 44–5.
 98. I have documented the influence of Baliyānī on Hafiz in my forthcoming study of the poets of the Timurid and Turkmen periods.
 99. For further discussion of Khwājū Kirmānī's affiliation and devotion to Baliyānī, see Ḥasanlī and Barakat, *Divān-i ash'ār-i Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Muḥammad Baliyānī*, introduction, pp. 12–15; Parvīz Adhkā'ī, 'Baliyānī, Pīr-i Khwājū', in *Nakhlband-i shu'arā*, ed. Khurāsānī, vol. 1, pp. 47–62; Aḥmad Nadhīr, 'Khwājū Kirmānī va murshid-e ū Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Kāzurūnī', in *Nakhlband-i shu'arā*, ed. Khurāsānī, vol. 1, pp. 15–34.
 100. Adhkā'ī, 'Baliyānī', p. 57.
 101. Aḥmad Nadhīr, 'Khwājū Kirmānī va murshid-e ū Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Kāzurūnī', *Nakhlband-i shu'arā*, ed. Khurāsānī, vol. 1, p. 19.
 102. 'Uthmān, *Miftāḥ*, pp. xi–xii.

103. Ibid., pp. xxx–xxxiii.
104. Zarīnkūb, *Dunbala-yi Justujū-yi dar tasawwuf-i Irān*, p. 201.
105. In one quatrain, he boasts that he received more illumination within the space of three years than the shaykh who sits through a forty-day retreat does in thirty. See Zarīnkūb, *Dunbala-yi Justujū*, p. 202.
106. Ibid., pp. 200–1.
107. Wheeler Thackston, transl., *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture 1989), p. 155. See also Shāh Qāsim-i Anvār, *Kullīyyāt-i Qāsim Anvār*, ed. Saʿīd Nafīsī (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Sanāʾī 1337/1958), p. 403 (where evidence in the poet's *Risāla dar biyān-i 'ilm* is given for his residence in the Safawī khānaqāh in Herat); see also Nafīsī's introduction, p. 83.
108. Dawlatshah Samarqandī, *Tadhkirat al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbbāsī (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī Bārānī, 1337/1958), p. 346.
109. For the influence of Maghribī's poetry on Shāh Qāsim's (and vice-versa), see Leonard Lewisohn, *A Critical Edition of the Divan of Maghrebi: With an Introduction Into His Life, Literary School and Mystical Poetry* (unpublished dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 108–16.
110. Nidā Zādīgān Miyārdān, 'Qāsim-i Anvār', in *Dānishnāma-ye zabān va adab-e fārsī*, ed. Ismāʿīl Saʿādat (Tehran: Farhangistān-i Zabān va Adab-i Fārsī, 1393/2014), vol. 5, p. 171.
111. Miyārdān, 'Qāsim-i Anvār', p. 171.
112. Zarīnkūb, *Dunbala-yi Justujū*, p. 200; Miyārdān, 'Qāsim-i Anvār', p. 170; Dhabīḥullāh Safā, *Tārīkh-i Adabīyyāt dar Irān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Firdaws, 1373/1994), 13th edn, vol. 4, p. 208.
113. Twenty-four poets of the period affiliated in one way or another with the *khānaqāh* institution are: Awhād al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 635/1238), Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 688/1289), Humām-i Tabrīzī (d. 714/1314), Amīr Ḥusaynī Haravī (d. 718/1318), Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī (d. 725/1325), ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1326), Amīr Ḥasan Dihlavī (d. 737/1336), Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. after 737/1337), Awhādī Marāghī (d. 738/1338), Khwājū Kirmānī (d. 742/1342), Amīn al-Dīn Baliyānī (d. 745/1344), ʿImād Faqīh Kirmānī (773/1364), Nāsir Bukhārāʾī (d. 773/1371), Kamāl Khujandī (d. 803/1400), Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī (d. 810/1408), Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī (d. 835/1431), Shāh Qāsim-i Anwār (d. 837/1433), Kātibī-yi Nishapurī (d. 838–39/1434–35), Khiyālī Bukharāʾī (d. 850/1446), Mashriqī Tabrīzī (d. 851/1454), Adharī Isfarāyinī (d. 866/1462), Shah Daʾī Shirazi (d. 869–70/1464–5), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī (d. 906/1501), and Muḥammad Lāhijī (d. 913/1507). See also my forthcoming volume, *Classical Persian Poetry and Poets of the Timurid and Türkmen Periods*.
114. See Leonard Lewisohn, 'Principles of the Philosophy of Ecstasy in Rūmī's Poetry', in Leonard Lewisohn, ed., *The Philosophy of Ecstasy: Rumi and the Sufi Tradition* (Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom, 2014).
115. See Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, p. 108.
116. The bulk and beauty of the literature of Persian Sufism during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is complemented by the quality and quantity of historiographical literature during the same period. As David Morgan observes: 'The most remarkable effect, historiographically, of the Mongol conquests was on history writing in Persia. The Mongol period is generally regarded, rightly or wrongly, as the best period of Persian historical writing ... Persian historical writing of the Mongol age has three immediately striking features; first, its bulk; second, the fact that the major part of it is, for the first time since the Arab

- invasions, written in Persian rather than in Arabic; and third, the wide-ranging interests of some of the writers – a range far greater than the previous evolution of historical scholarship in Persian would lead one to expect.’ See D. O. Morgan, ‘Persian Historians and the Mongols’, in D. O. Morgan, ed., *Medieval Historical Writings in the Christian and Islamic Worlds* (London: SOAS, 1982), p. 110.
117. ‘Poetry is the art *par excellence* of Persia, and her salient cultural achievement. Despite considerable accomplishments in painting, pottery, textiles, and architecture, in no other field have the Persians succeeded in achieving the same degree of eminence.’ See Ehsan Yarshater, ‘The Development of Iranian Literatures’, in Yarshater, *Persian Literature* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), pp. 15–16.
 118. Hossein Ziai, ‘Hāfez, *Lisān al-Ghayb* of Persian Poetic Wisdom’, in Alma Giese and J. Christoph Bürgel, eds, *Gott ist schön und Er Liebt die Schönheit, God is Beautiful and He Loves Beauty* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1994), p. 449.
 119. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 211.
 120. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
 121. Ihsan Yarshater, *Shi‘r-i fārsī dar ‘ahd-i Shāh Rukh*, p. 19.
 122. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 207.
 123. ‘Azīz Nasafī, *Zubda al-ḥaqā‘iq*, ed. Haqqwardī Nāsīrī (Tehran: Tahūrī, 1363/1985), p. 13.
 124. Thomas Haining, ‘The Mongols and Religion’, *Asian Affairs* XVII: 1 (1986), pp. 19–31.
 125. Jean-Paul Roux, ‘La Tolérance Religieuse dans les Empires Turco-Mongols’, *Revue de l’Histoire des religions* CCII: 2 (1986), pp. 131–68.
 126. *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 125. In a similar vein, Roger Savory opines: ‘The religious tolerance (some might say indifference) of the Mongol rulers deprived Sunnī or ‘orthodox’ Islam of its dominant position, and created conditions which facilitated the development not only of Shi‘ism but of popular religious beliefs of every kind. From the late thirteenth century onwards, a wide variety of extremist Shī‘ī sects flourished in Anatolia and Kurdistan, and many of these groups avoided persecution by the Ottoman government as schismatics only by placing themselves under the all-embracing and tolerant umbrella of Bektashī organisation. Anatolia in particular became a veritable melting pot of religious ideas. The two principle ingredients in this pot were Shi‘ism and Sufism, and in the course of the fourteenth century these two ingredients became permanently blended.’ See Roger Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 23–4.
 127. *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 218.
 128. Roux, ‘La Tolérance Religieuse dans les Empires Turco-Mongols’, p. 132.
 129. Mahmūd Shabistārī, *Gulshan-i rāz*, in *Majmū‘a-i āthār-i Shaykh Mahmūd Shabistārī*, ed. Samad Muwaḥḥid (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-i Tahūrī 1365/1986), p. 103, verses 874–80. Translation mine. For an extended analysis of these verses, see L. Lewisohn, ‘Shabistārī and the Mongols’ Legacy of Religious Tolerance’, in Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*.
 130. Khānlarī, *Dīvān*, ghazal 179, line 4; in Robert Bly and Leonard Lewisohn, transl., *The Angels Knocking on the Tavern Door: Thirty Poems of Hafez* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), p. 39. Abū’l-Hasan ‘Abd al-Rahmān Khatmī Lāhūrī explains that the poet means that one cannot recognise the truth of religion until one first perceives the reality (*ḥaqīqat*) of faith and attains inward certainty. As a consequence of that inward certainty, ‘one looks with compassion and mercy on the followers of all other faiths and creeds, and does not deny them however benighted and misguided they may be. This is one of the ideas especially

- recognised by the Sufis ... As long as the reality (*haqīqat*) of faith is not unveiled to one, the aspirant will rely on his powers of deduction and personal striving (*qiyās va ijtihād*), which only generate religious differences (*ikhtilāf*).’ See Abū’l-Hasan ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Khatmī Lāhūrī, *Sharḥ-i ‘irfānī-yi ghazalḥā-yi-i Hāfiz*, ed. Bahā’ al-Dīn Khurramshāhī, Kūrūsh Mansūrī and Husayn Mutī’ī-Amīn (Tehran: Nashr-i Qatra, 1374/1995), vol. 3, p. 1,183–4.
131. For further exposition of this, see Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, Chapter 7: ‘The Topography of Shabistārī’s Visionary Ecumenism’.
 132. Peter Awn, ‘The Ethical Concerns of Classical Sufism’, *The Journal of Religious Ethics* XI: 2 (1983), p. 258.
 133. Nasafī, *Zubdat al-ḥaqā’iq*, ed. H. Nāsirī (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-i Ṭahūrī 1364/1985), p. 75.
 134. Shāh Ni‘matullāh Walī, *Kullīyyāt-i ash‘ār-i Shāh Ni‘matu’llāh Walī*, ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh, (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khānaqāh-i Ni‘matullāhī 1361/1982), tarjī‘band I, p. 711.
 135. *Dīvān-i Hāfiz*, ed. Khānlārī, ghazal 64, verse 5.
 136. ‘Abbās ‘Alī Vafā’ī, ed., *Kullīyyāt-i Salmān Sāvajī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-e Sukhan 1389/2010), ghazal 232, p. 346.
 137. Peter Awn, ‘The Ethical Concerns of Classical Sufism’, *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, XI: 2 (1983), p. 258.
 138. Cited by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Akbar and Religion* (Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Dehli, 1989), p. 210. My translation.
 139. Khānlārī, *Dīvān*, ghazal 78, line 1. Robert Bly and L. Lewisohn, *Angels*, p. 33.
 140. See L. Lewisohn, ‘The Religion of Love and the Puritans of Islam: Sufi Sources of Hāfiz’s Anti-clericalism’, in Leonard Lewisohn, ed., *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).
 141. See, J. T. P. de Bruijn, ‘The *Qalandariyyāt* in Mystical Poetry, From Sanā’ī Onwards’, in Lewisohn, *Heritage of Sufism*, vol. 2.
 142. ‘One of the remarkable characteristics of Amīn al-Dīn Balīyānī’s verse is his overwhelming antipathy towards and all-encompassing struggle with the puritans of his age (*zāhidān-e zamān*), his poetry permeated by his reviling and rebuke of them, using epithets such as: base puritan (*zāhid-e dūn*), egocentric puritan (*zāhid-e khwud-bīn*), dessicated puritan (*zāhid-e khusk*), self-obsessed ill-tempered puritan (*zāhid-e khwudrā’y-e bad-khū*), unbaked puritan (*zāhid-e khām*), and confused puritan (*zāhid-e sar-gardān*). His anti-clericalism and anti-puritanism is one of the leitmotifs of his poetry. Likewise it can be said that one of the fundamental poetic motifs constantly repeated in the *Dīvān* of Hafiz is his conflict with asceticism and hypocrisy (*zuhd va riya*), but comparatively speaking, this motif occurs more frequently in the ghazals of Balīyānī compared to those of Hafiz (considering the greater quantity of the latter).’ See Hasanlī and Barakat, *Divān-e ash‘ār-e Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Balīyānī*, introduction, p. 19. The editors cite eighteen verses here that demonstrate the anti-clerical vein in his poetry.
 143. Hasanlī and Barakat, *Divān-i ash‘ār-i Shaykh Amīn al-Dīn Balīyānī*, ghazal 11, p. 59.
 144. See Lewisohn, ‘Sufi Symbolism and the Persian Hermeneutic Tradition: Reconstructing the Pagoda of Attar’s Esoteric Poetics’, in L. Lewisohn and C. Shackleton, eds, *The Art of Spiritual Flight: Farid al-Din ‘Attar and the Persian Sufi Tradition* (London: I.B. Tauris and The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2006), pp. 255–308, and the article cited in n. 140 above.
 145. See L. Lewisohn, ‘Sufism’s Religion of Love, From Rābi‘a to Ibn ‘Arabī’, in Lloyd Ridgeon, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 150–80.

146. Khānlarī, *Dīwān-i Hāfiz*, ghazal 78, line 3. Transl. Robert Bly and Leonard Lewisohn.
147. See Husayn Ilahi-Ghomshei, 'The Principles of the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry', in Lewisohn, *Hafiz and the Religion of Love*, pp. 77–106.
148. *Kullīyyat-i Qāsim-i Anvār*, edited by Sa'īd Nafīsī (Tehran: Kitābkhāneh-ye Sanā'ī, 1337/1958), p. 281, line 4,621.
149. From Nizāmī of Ganja, *Khusraw u Shīrīn*, in Waḥīd Dastgirdī, ed., *Kullīyyāt-i Ḥakīm Nizāmī Ganjavī* (Tehran: Intishārāt- Bihzād, 1378/1999), p. 95 (12: 2–4).
150. Khānlarī, *Dīwān-i Hāfiz*, ghazal 426, line 5 – transl. Bly and Lewisohn, *Angels*, p. 49.

Architecture in the Interregnum: The Mozaffarid, Jalayerid and Kartid Contributions

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The interregnum between the Ilkhanids and the Timurids, when Iran was split between a patchwork of smaller principalities, is one that has been treated unevenly by art historians. Although the contributions of the Jalayerids, Injuids and Mozaffarids to the art of the book have been widely acclaimed, their patronage of architecture deserves much more recognition, as does that of their contemporaries the Kartids. One can argue not just for the general continuity of architectural trends inherited from the Ilkhanids, but for the production of several masterpieces that can be seen as the progenitors of many innovations in form and decoration without which Timurid architecture would have been much poorer. In addition to exploring these themes in this chapter, I will also suggest that some well-known monuments that have been attributed to other periods should in fact be credited to this fertile era.

The Mozaffarids

The best-known material is that of the Mozaffarids. Their architectural decoration is particularly famous for having expanded the range of colours of tile mosaic.¹ White and dark- and light-blue had previously been the Ilkhanid staples, the Masjed-e Jāme‘ of Ashtarjān in 1315 being the first known to have added, very tentatively, ochre to this customary scheme.² The second dated example, where it was used with a little more confidence, was in the entrance of the Emānzādeh Bābā Qāsem in Isfahan (741/1340–41). Even greater use of ochre is found in the tilework of the nearby Madrased-ye Emāmi, a building whose discussion has been tied to that of the Emānzādeh Bābā Qāsem, and whose date remains controversial. Godard noticed that the foundation inscription of the Emānzādeh Bābā Qāsem mentioned that its founder erected ‘these buildings’, which he took to include the nearby Madrased-ye Emāmi, noting that its tilework of two colours of blue on a white ground was similar to that of the Emānzādeh Bābā Qāsem.³ He suggested that the lacuna in a date in an inscription of 7x5 should be restored as 725/1325. Mary Crane, writing on

the mihrab that had been removed from the madrasa, and which eventually found its way to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, read a date of 755/1354 in two places in the building.⁴ Godard's subsequent rejoinder⁵ noted that the dates were repair work, and therefore unreliable; but he also then attributed part of the tilework of the building to the period of the Mozaffarid Sultan Mahmud (1365–75). He gave two grounds for this: the first stylistic; the second the incorporation of the names of the orthodox caliphs and Shi'i imams. He claimed that the latter was found only during Mozaffarid direct rule of Isfahan under Sultan Mahmud, citing as parallels the prayer hall in the Isfahan Jāme' and the door in the Emāmzādeh Esma'il (discussed further below). Pickett, however, negated this argument by noting that the names of the twelve imams and the orthodox caliphs had previously appeared together at the shrine of Pir-e Bakrān and the Friday mosque of Ashtarjān.⁶ He suggested the tilework was completed over a long period, from c. 1335–60.⁷

I find it unlikely that there are several periods of decoration so close to one another in this building, or that it would have needed repairs so soon after its initial construction. In this period of rapidly evolving tilework, it would not be surprising to find several styles used concurrently on the same monument (as is the case on the nearly contemporary Kerman Friday mosque).

The mihrab of the Madraseh-ye Emāmi has been compared to that of the Emāmzādeh Bābā Qāsem, but this probably reflects the earlier poor quality of the reproduction of the former in colour photographs.⁸ It uses ochre extensively – none is found in the Bābā Qāsem mihrab. Crucially, much green (the dark green typical of Iranian tile mosaic) is present, a colour that appears in tile mosaic in Iran probably for the second time in this monument.⁹ Green can be found in the Chinese lotuses of the conch, lower down in the polylobes that make up the main pattern of the recess, in the border beneath the epigraphic panel within the recess, and for the repeated 'tuning fork' motif in the main arch – those attached to letters are the same dark blue as the epigraphy, but those freestanding, added for symmetrical effect, are in dark green.

The north *eyvān* exemplifies the range of tilework in the building. Even though fragmentary, the most spectacular design element, as noticed by Pickett, was the vault – in spite of the fact that it used only the limited range of white and dark- and light-blue. The employment of tile mosaic on vaults remained unusual in Iran (although earlier examples from Anatolia are known).¹⁰ The tympanum at the back of the *eyvān* is another ambitious composition, combining the names of the Mobāshara in square Kufic in ten square panels, with a surrounding interlace containing the names of the fourteen chosen ones.¹¹ This panel uses ochre extensively within the floral decoration. Below is the *muqarnas* niche, whose spandrel decoration led Godard to compare it with that of the spandrels at the back of the south *eyvān* of the Mozaffarid prayer hall in the Isfahan Jāme'. While they do use some green, the Emāmi spandrels do not have the fluency of line and greater use of chinoiserie motifs of the

Jāme' spandrels, marking them as earlier. Green is also used occasionally for fillers in the *muqarnas* of the niche below, as well as in the *muqarnas* niches of the cells around the courtyard. Two innovative epigraphic designs are also found in the *muqarnas* niche of the north *eyvān*. At the centre of the base is a six-sided polylobed medallion containing the names of Muhammad and the Rashidun. Above it is a panel of square Kufic spelling 'Allah', which in turn has another square Kufic inscription (Quran. 112:1–4) in smaller letters within its borders.

The south dome chamber that originally contained the mihrab also has an impressive vault decorated with light- and dark-blue tiles, mostly on an unglazed brick ground, with *muqarnas* semi-domes between plain squinches leading to four kite-shaped panels, and a flat panel of square Kufic at the apex (Figure 11.1). The designer, Muhammad ibn 'Omar al-Shaykhi, rang the changes in the use of arabesques in this scheme. On three of the semi-domes they are on a plain brick ground;¹² on the fourth, above the mihrab, they are in tile mosaic; and on the kite-shaped panels he added a background of tiny light-blue rectangular tiles, oriented with the lines of the vaulting. So proud was he of his accomplishment that he signed his work in two places, above the mihrab and on the vault of the north *eyvān*.

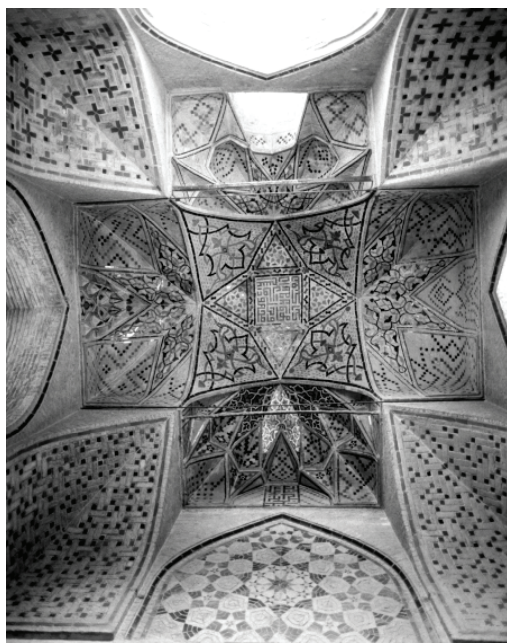


Fig. 11.1. Isfahan, Madraseh-ye Emāmi (755/1354), detail of vault in south dome chamber (photo: B. O'Kane).

So what is the likely date of the original tilework in the Madraseh-ye Emāmi?¹³ Godard argued that the obvious repair date of 755/1354–55 in the qibla *eyvān* was from yet a third building, but a more plausible conclusion is that it was re-employed from another location within the same building. Such a date would easily accommodate the range of tilework styles and colours found in the building.¹⁴

Much of the tilework on the Kerman Friday Mosque dates from its foundation in 750/1349–50,¹⁵ although much was also heavily restored in the twentieth century. The main entrance *eyvān*, the vestibule behind it, the small entrance *eyvān* on the qibla side and the qibla wall all have substantial remains of original tilework.¹⁶ In general, the Mozaffarid work can be distinguished from later additions by the larger size of the tesserae. The full range of colours, with the exception of black, can be found, although the green here is of a lighter hue than that of the Madraseh-ye Emāmi. But here too, as at the Madraseh-ye Emāmi, some panels have a restricted palette: white and light- and dark-blue for the inscriptions within the vestibule and running through the qibla *eyvān*, with the addition of ochre (but not green) for the inscription on the entrance *eyvān*. Another indication of how archaic techniques can appear with the most up-to-date ones in the same monument is the use of moulded unglazed terracotta pieces in three places: the engaged column of the main arch of the entrance *eyvān*, the engaged columns of the recessed side niches within the entrance *eyvān*, and on the qibla wall flanking the hexagonal medallions with the names of Muhammad and ‘Ali. The *muqarnas* vestibule vault, mostly in *bannā’i* technique, is particularly impressive, leading to a twelve-sided star filled with tile mosaic; its apex has a pinwheel that is a favourite Mozaffarid motif (Figure 11.2).

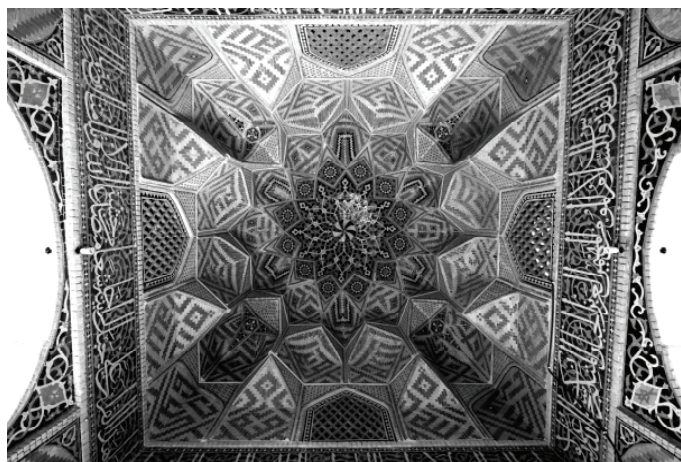


Fig. 11.2. Kerman, Friday Mosque (750/1349–50), vault of entrance vestibule (photo: B. O’Kane).

Not far from the Madrasedh-ye Emāmi and Emāmzādeh Bābā Qāsem is another monument of great significance: the mausoleum of Sultan Bakht Aghā, evidently part of a madrasa into which the adjoined twin minaret portal led. On the gravestone in the dome chamber she is identified as the daughter of Amir Khosrowshāh. In the historical sources she is mostly known as Khan Sultan, the wife of Shah Mahmud the Mozaffarid, against whom she conspired, for which she was put to death by her husband in 768/1366–67.¹⁷ However, the gravestone is dated earlier, to 753/1352–53,¹⁸ and its formula indeed indicates that she was still alive when it was put in place. Like the Madrasedh-ye Emāmi, this is a complex whose parts vary considerably in style and have been attributed to a wide variety of dates,¹⁹ but which should more plausibly be seen as the product of one building campaign of the same date as the tombstone, 753/1352–53, a time of continued experimentation in tilework.

The most innovative aspect of the complex is the dome. Pickett aptly commented on its sophisticated design of diminishing tiled lozenges set against unglazed brick. More important is its shape: despite the lack of a published sectional drawing, it is not difficult to recognise it as a double dome on a tall drum whose outer and inner profiles must be at a considerable distance from each other (Figure 11.3). There is also a very slight increase in the width of the base at the top of the drum, making it perhaps the earliest bulbous double dome known, some three decades before the better-known Timurid examples of the Shah-e Zende in Samarqand.²⁰



Fig. 11.3. Isfahan, mausoleum of Soltan Bakht Aghā (753/1252–53), view of dome (photo: B. O’Kane).

Another innovative dome chamber in the Isfahan region is the Masjed-e Gonbad at Azādān (1365), whose painted interior inscription identifies it as a building for the standards (i.e. those carried in processions). Its architecture is pedestrian, but it preserves a fascinating array of murals, including Imam ‘Ali’s sword, the *dhu’l-feqār*, and, more importantly, one of the earliest representations of the architecture of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.²¹

Most of the work on the Mozaffarid prayer hall in the Isfahan Jāme‘ seems to have been completed at this time.²² This too displays innovations in tilework and vaulting. The rear of the qibla *eyvān* displays one of the earliest uses of *bannā’i* technique for sacred names in square Kufic. The work is set at an angle of forty-five degrees, seemingly continuing beyond the arched frame into infinity – a subtle intimation of God’s omnipresence. The main vault, mostly covered with geometric *bannā’i* technique, has two spectacular tile mosaic panels to either side of eight-pointed stars. The outer point of each star is made of a panel containing the names in square Kufic not only of Allah, Muhammad and the Rashidun, but also of Hasan and Hoseyn. Within one of the stars is a circular epigraphic medallion containing a hadith; within the other the name of the craftsman.²³ Finally, at the centre of both is the pinwheel motif. The spandrels of the arch at the back of the *eyvān* display a large peony with a black ground, in addition to the by-now usual Chinese lotuses – a marked tilt towards chinoiserie at the expense of arabesques. The soffit of this arch has an early tiled example of a script that was quickly to become a Timurid favourite.²⁴ This uses square and rectangular tiles, all set at right angles, to create the outline of letters in *naskh*. As noted by Pickett, the Saveh Jāme‘ minaret has the earliest example of it in unglazed brick.²⁵

The most important structural innovation is within the prayer hall, covered with wide transverse vaults (Figure 11.4). The central vault is squared by two further barrel vaults, making a base of brick-faced pendentives which support the eight-windowed domed lantern above. From ground level, only the narrow edges of the windows of the lantern are visible, belying their wedge shapes that provide the bulk



Fig. 11.4. Isfahan, Friday Mosque, Mozaffarid prayer hall (*suffā-ye ‘Omar*), transverse vaulting and lantern (photo: B. O’Kane).

necessary to hold up the brick dome. This is a close parallel to the scheme at Turbot-e Jām discussed below, which was further adapted at one of the Timurid architectural masterpieces, the lecture hall of the Khargerd madrasa.²⁶

The Yazd Friday Mosque, founded in 1325, has a history of additions and repairs over the following 150 years. Others have previously remarked on the difficulty of untangling its chronology.²⁷ The date of 777/1374–75 is found on two elements of the mosque that are particularly important for us, the mihrab and the south prayer hall. There seems to be no problem in assigning almost all of the tilework in the dome chamber to this date.²⁸ The amount of tilework is in itself a remarkable feature: no dome chamber approaching this size had previously been almost completely sheathed with tile,²⁹ producing an effect of unparalleled richness that was to be emulated in so many later examples. There are varying degrees of lavishness within the chamber. The dome itself, signed by Sa'd ibn Muhammad Kaduk al-Yazdi,³⁰ is in unglazed brick tiles and monochrome-glazed white and light-and dark-blue tiles, but with an unusually complicated geometric pattern based on five- and seven-pointed stars, climaxing at the apex in the pinwheel design we have seen elsewhere. The zone of transition is relatively restrained, using *bannā'i* technique to spell out sacred names in square Kufic. Most of the walls of the lower cube feature a more refined *bannā'i* using smaller tiles to create a pattern of dense square Kufic. Tile mosaic is used for the spandrels of the arches and some of their frames, but most elaborately for the stunning mihrab. It now also makes extensive use of black or dark purple.³¹ Like the Kerman Jāme', it makes substantial use of terracotta set within tile. The cynosure is the spandrels of the main arch, displaying chinoiserie flowers on light-blue stems. The medallions in the centre of the spandrels are one of the masterpieces of Iranian epigraphic design: the six interweaving names of *Muhammad* are easy to spot, but less so the six *'Alis* within them in white, which at first glance appear to be an unusually sinuous rosette (Figure 11.5).³²



Fig. 11.5. Yazd, Friday Mosque, detail of spandrel of mihrab (1374-75) (photo: B. O'Kane).

Some major structural innovations should also be noted. The first is probably part of the original Ilkhanid design: the almost open back of the qibla *eyvān*, permitting a view straight from the courtyard into the dome chamber. It was copied in the Mashhad Jāme‘ of Gowhar Shād, but surprisingly almost nowhere else. The second and third are contemporary with the date on the mihrab of 777/1374–75 – namely, the addition of balconies over the alcoves of the side recesses of the *eyvān* to link the tribune galleries there, and the building of the transverse-vaulted south prayer hall.

Two outstanding pieces of Mozaffarid woodwork deserve mention, especially as they are closely related (Figure 11.6). One is a door of two leaves and the tympanum above it in the vestibule of the Emāmzādeh Esmā‘il in

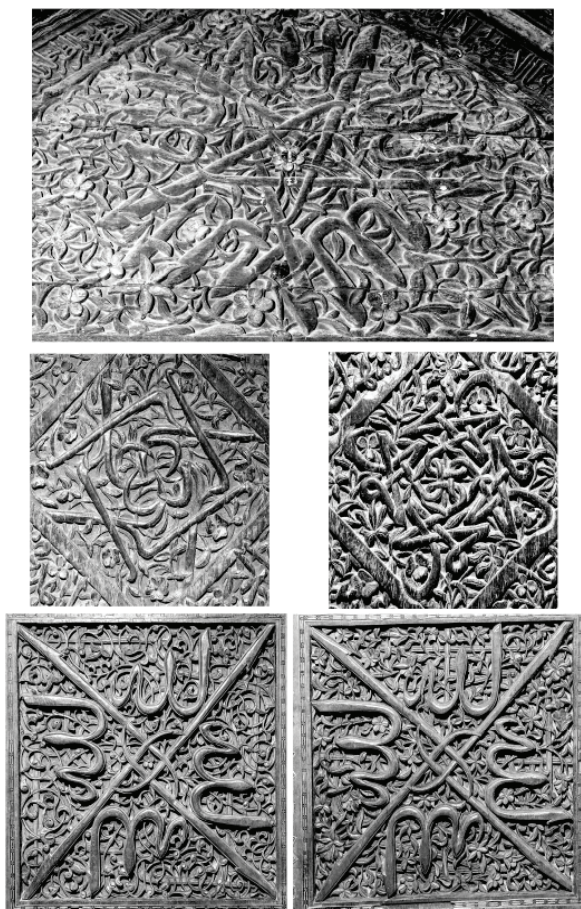


Fig. 11.6. Top: Isfahan, Emāmzādeh Ismā‘il, door (1359–75), detail of tympanum. Middle: Imamzade Isma‘il, door (1359–75), detail of left and right leaves. Bottom: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, rahleh, 1910.10.218 (761/1360), top square panels (photos: B. O’Kane).

Isfahan.³³ The inscription on the tympanum is undated, but identifies Shāh Mahmud b. Sultan Muhammad, who ruled in Isfahan from 1359 until his death in 1375. The centre of the tympanum has an epigraphic five-pointed star made up of five *Allahs*; the *alefs* narrow at the bottom to a small curved point. Although the *Allahs* are the obvious focal point, careful scrutiny reveals the presence of ten 'Alis interwoven symmetrically with the *Allahs*: five have the 'ayn inserted between the *lām* and the *hā* of *Allah*, and use the ambiguous shape here of the two letters to complete the word; the other five have the 'ayn beneath the intersection of the *alefs* in the centre. The focal points of the doors below are also epigraphic lozenges, with 'Ali on the left leaf and *Muhammad* on the right, each repeated four times and intertwined, the *Muhammad* in an unusual knotted form. The second piece is a *rahleh* dated 761/1360, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.³⁴ It was originally made for the otherwise unknown Sadrabad madrasa at Anār by one Zeyn Hasan Soleymān Esfahani. Here, too, symmetrical epigraphic compositions are present, on the top of the outer sides. At first glance they contain only *Allah* repeated four times;³⁵ the *alefs*, like those of the tympanum of the Emāmzādeh Esmā'il door, intertwine and narrow at the bottom to small curved points. On each side the Allah is raised above floriated stems. However, in a remarkable display of virtuoso carving, there is yet, like the tympanum of the Emāmzādeh Esmā'il door, an almost hidden lower epigraphic level, where on one side 'Ali and on the other *Muhammad* are also repeated four times, in each case in a form very closely matching those on the door (Figure 11.6). The lower part of the *rahleh* contains a polylobed arch topped by a medallion, with spandrels superbly carved with chinoiserie flowers that closely match those of the Mozaffarid prayer hall in the Isfahan Jāme'. The inner arch contains a stand supporting a vase from which springs a stylised plant – a form that also proved to be a favourite in tile mosaic in the coming century. Between the inner and polylobed arches are inscriptions with the names of the twelve imams.³⁶ The inscription on the inner face of the stand, in addition to the historical information mentioned above, calls for blessings on Muhammad and his family, followed by a mutilated gap, and then the name of the caliph 'Ali. The gap likely consisted of the names of the first three orthodox caliphs, showing the same combination of revered Sunni and Shi'i figures that was found on the Isfahan *jam'e* prayer hall and other fourteenth-century buildings in the Isfahan area.³⁷

The Jalayerids

Jalayerid patronage is particularly famous in the field of illustrated manuscripts. The Great Jalayerid *Shahnameh*³⁸ and *Kalileh and Demneh*,³⁹ most likely from the reign of Shaykh Oveys (1374–82) and the *Khamseh* of Khvaju Kermani (dated 1396) commissioned by Sultan Ahmad⁴⁰ are the outstanding examples. The latter was painted in Baghdad, but despite that is considered one of the masterpieces of Persian book illustration.

We may also consider two of Baghdad's finest buildings, the Mirjāniyya madrasa (1357–58, now largely destroyed)⁴¹ and Khān Mirjān (1358–59),⁴² erected by the eponymous governor Amin al-Din Mirjān ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Soltāni al-Uljeiti, as part of Iranian cultural heritage – trying to separate Persian from Iraqi strains in Jalayerid patronage in Baghdad at this juncture would be an unproductive task. The superb calligraphy in the two monuments was by Ahmad Shāh *al-naqqāsh*, known as *zarin qalam*, a versatile Tabrizi craftsman who worked also in Najaf and Shiraz.⁴³

Mirjān was a eunuch, formally in the service of Öljeitü, who was appointed governor of Baghdad at an unknown date, but presumably in the reign of the Jalayerid Shaykh Hasan (r. 1340–56), some time before work on the madrasa was begun.⁴⁴ The portal inscription credits the mother of Sultan Hasan with the funds for the building, but it was only finished a little after Hasan's successor Oveys (r. 1356–74) came to power. In 1363 Mirjān participated with many amirs in a revolt against Oveys, which was put down in 1364. But Mirjān must have been deemed to be acting under duress, since, when his replacement as governor died in 1367, Mirjān was reappointed by Oveys, and remained in that position until his death in 1372.⁴⁵ He was buried in the mausoleum in the madrasa, although it is not known whether the tomb was originally built for him or for the mother of Shaykh Hasan.

The madrasa is justly famous for its long *waqf* inscriptions in its domed prayer hall penned by Ahmad Shah, but the most advanced feature of its architecture is the dome of the mausoleum. This is slightly bulbous, and is supported on a tall drum of engaged columns decorated with lozenge motifs in *bannā'i* technique (Figure 11.7). The use of continuously engaged columns on a circular base is familiar from the tomb towers of Radkan East (1205–06)⁴⁶ and Karabaghlar, near Nakhchevan (early fourteenth century),⁴⁷ the latter is also decorated with *bannā'i* technique. Although no sectional drawing was ever published, it is clear from a photograph of the scalloped interior of the dome supported on three tiers of *muqarnas* that, like the near-contemporary Sultan Bakht Agha mausoleum in Isfahan, it was a



Fig. 11.7. Baghdad, Mirjāniyya Madrasa (1357–58), exterior of dome (after Creswell).

double dome with considerable space between the two shells.

Mirjān's khan (called a *tim* and shops [*dokākin*] in its foundation inscription)⁴⁸ was also at the forefront of technical innovation (Figure 11.8). The khan is in the shape of a rectangular hall surrounded by forty-five cells in two storeys. Eight transverse arches, an unprecedented eleven metres wide,⁴⁹ span the width of the hall. But it is not just the span that impresses; even more innovative is the lighting arrangement between the transverse vaults. A window at each end between the transverse arches was the norm in halls, but here the problem of lighting this vast space (11 × 28 metres) was greatly alleviated by creating a second tier of windows higher up between the main

vaults – a form that was, if not quite made possible, then considerably assisted by the great width of the transverse arches. We will see, if not on this scale, parallels in the vaulting of the shrine at Turbot-e Jām, discussed below.

Within the current borders of Iran, Jalalyerid patronage has gone unrecognised; but this too should be rectified by a reconsideration of the chronology of the Ardabil shrine. According to the *Safwat al-safā*, a fourteenth-century biography of Shaykh Safi, the progenitor of the Safavid dynasty, the tomb of Shaykh Safi was built by his son Sadr al-Din Musa, who also built the adjacent Dār al-Hoffāz.⁵⁰ When did this happen?

Kishvar Rizvi, responsible for the most recent in-depth study of the shrine, notes an eighteenth-century source that mentions the tomb took ten years to build,⁵¹ which she interpreted as the ten-year period from the shaykh's death, 1335–45. According to the *Safwat al-safā*, the Dār al-Hoffāz was built a few years after the tomb of Shaykh Safi. The epigraphy on the portal indeed names Sadr al-Din as the founder.

Rizvi was of the opinion that the epigraphic programme of Dār al-Hoffāz and the tomb tower of Shaikh Safi were commissioned in the fourteenth century, during the Timurid period, and even described the Dār al-Hoffāz as a rich exemplar of early Timurid architecture and decoration.⁵² But, given that the Jalayerids ruled over Ardabil in the second half of the fourteenth century,



Fig. 11.8. Baghdad, Khān Mirjān (after Creswell).

apart from the brief periods of Timur's passing with his army, assigning it a fourteenth-century date with Timurid patronage is baffling.

Can we narrow down the date of the tomb and Dār al-Hoffāz, and have there been substantial alterations? First we can eliminate the latter: had there been any substantial alterations, then Sadr al-Din's name would have been excised as the founder and a new patron's name inscribed. But as Sadr al-Din lived to the ripe old age of ninety, dying in 794/1391–92, this still leaves a long period between his death and that of Shaykh Safi, in 1334. Morton pointed out the stylistic parallels with nearby Ilkhanid monuments, such as the tomb tower dated 1322 at Barda, which actually has *bannā'i* work spelling out 'Allah' in square Kufic, like that of the tomb of Shaykh Safi.⁵³ But such *bannā'i* work continued until the fifteenth century. The best dating control is the colours of the tile mosaic. Both the window of the tomb tower and the façade of the Dār al-Hoffāz, especially its entrance, include the full range, including dark green, which we have seen before at the Kerman Friday Mosque (1349–50) and in later buildings such as Isfahan's Madraseh-ye Emāmi (755/1354–55). The middle of the fourteenth century can therefore be used as a *terminus post quem* (Figure 11.9).⁵⁴ The relatively large size of the tesserae would also favour a Mozaffarid date rather than any later date. This would also fit better with the historical circumstances: on the death of the Ilkhanid Abu Sa'id, Sadr al-Din Musa soon fell out with the Chupanid ruler of Azerbaijan, Malek Ashraf, and had to flee to Gilan. Only when Malek Ashraf died, in 1357, was Sadr al-Din able to return to Ardabil.⁵⁵ The ten years that the tomb supposedly took to build are thus more likely to have begun in 1357 than in 1335, the date of Shaykh Safi's death. This would also fit perfectly the stylistic evidence, whose closest parallels, as we have seen, are work from the same period of the Mozaffarids in Isfahan and Kerman.

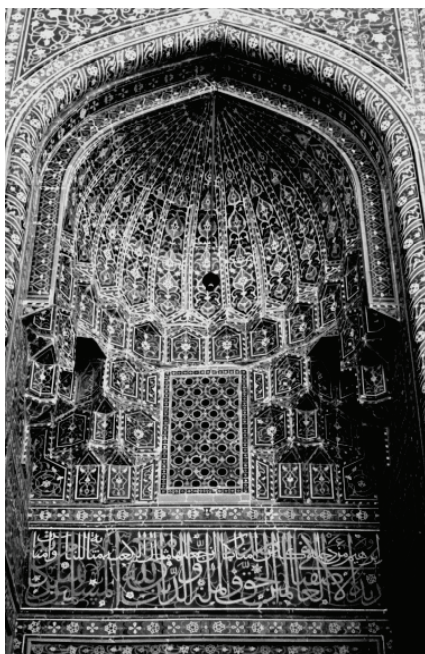


Fig. 11.9. Ardabil Shrine, Dār al-Hoffāz, detail of entrance (photo: B. O'Kane).

The extremely unusual exterior elevation of the Dār al-Hoffāz is also worth commenting on. We are of course missing large numbers of medieval Iranian

buildings that may have provided parallels, but those that come most readily to mind are the façades of Mamluk mosques, or even the *maq'ad qibtis* of Mamluk architecture (surviving examples of the latter are late Mamluk, but they may have replicated earlier ones). The *kurdi*, a wooden corbel supporting a lintel at the entrance of an *eyvān*, appears in Cairo for the first time at around the same period – the second half of the fourteenth century.⁵⁶ The name is suggestive of Kurdistan, then Jalayerid-controlled, and the same architectural feature is seen in Jalayerid painting of the same date in the illustrations of the 1396 *Khamseh* of Khvau Kermāni.⁵⁷ It might not be too far-fetched to suggest that Mamluk–Jalayerid influences could have gone in both directions.

The Kartids

The best-known Kartid monument is the dome chamber in the town of Torbat-e Jām, erected opposite the grave of the eponymous Shaykh Ahmad-e Jām.⁵⁸ The wall painting in the dome chamber, securely dated by inscription to 763/1361–62, has recently been cleaned, revealing much new detail, particularly on the lower walls. Below the main inscription under the squinches, the painting divided the wall into three areas of almost equal width. The smaller doors of the side walls leave the most room for the decorative scheme. In the centre, imitation *bannā'i* technique frames a rectangular panel with an oval medallion and four quarter-medallions in the corner. There is one inscription below, and one further down, above the small side door. The central section is flanked by square upper panels with a central medallion and four quarter-medallions, and on each side below by two panels with a flowering vase within an arch. The delicate chinoiserie flowers, including lotuses and peonies rising from the vase, are particularly fine.

In the centre of the medallions on the entrance side are two craftsmen's inscriptions.⁵⁹ That on the south reads: '*amal al-'abd al-za'if Soltānshāh naqqāsh, ghafar Allāh lahu* ('the work of the poor slave Soltānshāh the decorator, may God Pardon him') (Figure 11.10). That on the north reads: '*amal bi-tajdid hadha al-saqf ostād 'Abd al-Vahhāb-e bannā ghafar Allāh lahu* ('Abd al-Vahhāb the builder made the restoration of the roof, may God pardon him').

In other places, the restoration has made the details clearer, as in the chinoiserie flowers on the red stems surrounding the polylobed medallions in the squinches, and adjacent to the circular medallions on the faces of the squinches. One of the latter has a particularly striking 'op art' reinterpretation of the pinwheel motif (Figure 11.11) that we have seen in both painted work and in tilework in the Mozffarid monuments. More delicate chinoiserie decoration is seen on parts of the dome decoration.

There is one painted interior relatively nearby that bears a striking similarity – that of the mausoleum of another important Sufi, Abu Sa'id, at Mehna, nowadays within the boundaries of modern Turkmenistan, where its location is



Fig. 11.10. Top: Torbat-i Jām, Shrine of Ahmad-e Jām, panel with craftsman's signature in main dome chamber (763/1361–62)

Bottom: Mehna, mausoleum of Abu Sa'id, panel on lower wall (photos: B. O'Kane)

normally referred to as Meana.⁶⁰ The painting was added to a building originally erected either at the time of the shaykhs's death in 1049, or perhaps in the second half of the twelfth century, after the devastation of the area by the Turkish Ghuzz tribe.⁶¹

The correspondences between the two are remarkable. Both use painted imitations of *bannā'i* brickwork – that at Mehna in the squinches. Both have variations on the pinwheel motif (Figure 11.11).⁶² On the lower walls, both display horizontal panels with a central circular epigraphic medallion and quarter-medallions in the corners (Figure 11.10). Further down on each are



Fig. 11.11. Top: Mehna, mausoleum of Abu Sa'id, details of pinwheel motif (1360s).

Bottom: Torbat-i Jām, Shrine of Ahmad-e Jām, detail of zone of transition in main dome chamber with pinwheel motif (763/1361–62) (photos: B. O'Kane).

vertical panels with rather delicate vases from which chinoiserie blossoms spring, each leaving much empty space within the frame – a far cry from the much denser version of the flowering-vase motif found in its earliest painted incarnation, in the Shamsiyya complex in Yazd (Figure 11.12).⁶³ Both use the densely repeated phrase *al-mulk li'llāh* ('sovereignty is God's') in Kufic as framed rectangular surrounds. Sprays of Chinese blossoms on thin stems, arranged naturalistically, can be found in each, both on compartments of the dome and within niches on the lower walls.

Admittedly, to ascribe a date to the Mehna tomb painting of c. 1360 is to complicate the building history, since the style of the exterior tilework and the recently uncovered lustre tiles would point towards an earlier date in the fourteenth century. Is it possible that the exterior tilework could be as late as

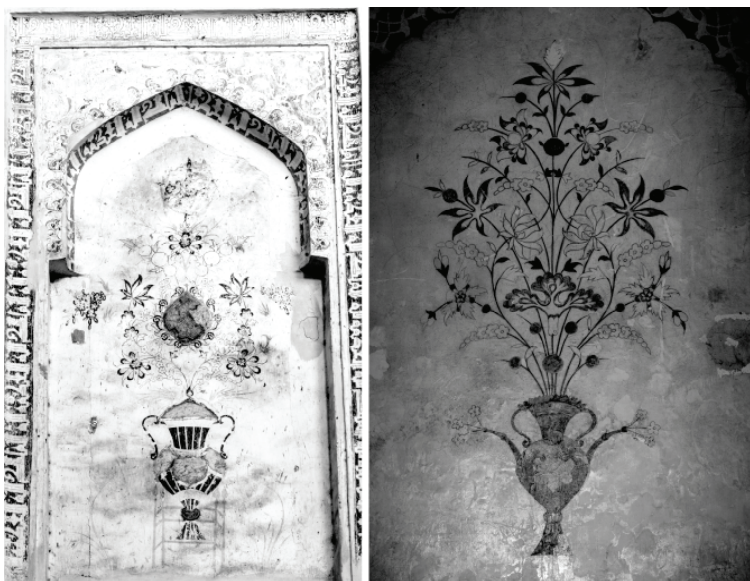


Fig. 11.12. Left: Mehna, mausoleum of Abu Sa'id, detail of flowering vase panel (1360s).

Right: Torbat-i Jām, Shrine of Ahmad-e Jām, detail of flowering vase panel in main dome chamber (763/1361–62) (photos: B. O'Kane).

1360? It uses, in addition to tile mosaic, a variety of techniques, such as underglaze painting in its engaged columns and for the teardrop medallions set within the larger circular medallion of the tympanum above the entrance. Uniquely, it also expands the range of colours of the tile mosaic by incorporating small, circular medallions of lustre tiles within the tile mosaic inscription.⁶⁴ And, as the Hoseyn Rezā tomb at Fushanj demonstrates (see below), Kartid tilework was conservative. But since so few examples of the kind of star-and-cross lustre tiles found in the interior date from after the first quarter of the fourteenth century, it would be a stretch to attribute all the tilework to c. 1360.⁶⁵

Alternatively, could the painting also date from the first half of the fourteenth century? Fortunately, there is one clinching piece of evidence for the date of c. 1360: on the lower walls at Mehna there was until recently a fragmentary medallion containing the name 'Soltānshāh ibn'. The location is not where one would expect to find a patron's name, and indeed it is at the same area on the lower walls as the medallion where Soltānshāh the *naqqāsh* ('decorator' or 'designer') signed his work at Torbat-e Jām.⁶⁶ The total number of building campaigns at Mehna remains to be elucidated, but it is clear that the painting is another masterpiece of Kartid architectural decoration from the same craftsman who worked at Torbat-e Jam.

The roof of the Masjed-e Kermāni, adjacent to the dome chamber at Turbot-e Jām, displays advanced examples of transverse vaults (Figure 11.13). While not as radical as those of the Khan Mirjān at Baghdad, they are comparable to those of the Mozaffarid prayer hall in the Isfahan Jāme', and the vaulting shares with it a lantern of a smaller diameter than the room below (Figure 11.13). Although the stucco within this hall is dated earlier in the fourteenth century,⁶⁷ it has been surmised that the inscription in the main dome chamber mentioned above regarding renewal of the roof might also apply to the vaulting within this space.⁶⁸



Fig. 11.13. Torbat-i Jām, Shrine of Ahmad-e Jām, lantern and transverse vaults in Masjed-e Kermāni (763/1361–62?) (photo: B. O'Kane).

Finally, the cenotaph of the Hoseyn Rezā tomb at Fushanj is a superb example of the art of carved and glazed terracotta tilework, the only one to be found outside Transoxiana (Figure 11.14). My publication of this posited a date between that of the mausoleum of Buyān Qoli Khān (c. 1360) and the passing of Timur through the area in 1381.⁶⁹ With the discovery of another fragment from the cenotaph, in the Herat Museum, with the date Sha'ban



Fig. 11.14. Fushanj, tomb of Hoseyn Rezā, detail of cenotaph now in Herat Museum (photo: B. O'Kane).

780/November–December 1378, this can now be confirmed.⁷⁰ For this late date, the quality of the work is finer than would be expected from its near contemporaries in Transoxiana.⁷¹

Conclusions

What, then, can we make of the architectural legacy of this period? The attribution of the tomb of Shaykh Safi and the Dār al-Hoffāz at Ardabil to the Jalayerid period permits us to expand the range of architectural patronage in their dominions. We should also acknowledge the innovation of the design of the façade of the Dār al-Hoffāz. It probably reflects the elevation of some non-extant Iranian buildings, but at least gives us a glimpse of a typology that has not survived other than in Egypt.

In terms of decoration, we should note the major changes not just in the expansion of the range of colours of tile mosaic, but in particular from a concentration on buildings with mainly brick decoration to ones that on the exterior, and even sometimes in the interior as well, were mostly tiled. This has been decried by some as a backward step, leading from structural to façade architecture;⁷² but this ignores the extent to which earlier brick decoration was also a decorative revetment on a brick core. In any case, when the façades are as stunning as those of the Yazd and Kerman Friday mosques, it is surely difficult to regard this as other than a triumph of balance between colour and form. And in a different medium – painted plaster – some of Iran's finest interiors are showcased in the legacy of the Kartids. One of the masterpieces of medieval woodwork, the Qur'an stand of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, can also now clearly be seen to be Mozaffarid work.

But formal accomplishments were also notable. These include the move to double domes in which the shells were of substantially different heights, seen both in Isfahan and Baghdad, presaging the triumphs of the Timurids in this respect. Other radical structural developments include the transverse vaulting of the Khan Mirjān, of the Yazd and Isfahan Friday mosques, and of the Masjed-e Kermāni, and in particular the incorporation of the large lantern dome over the square of smaller diameter seen in the Isfahan Jāme'.

All of these innovations were crucial to developments seen immediately afterwards in Timurid architecture, and indeed many of Timur's finest buildings are signed by craftsmen with Isfahani or Shirazi *nisbas*.

As the case of Hafiz makes clear, genius of expression need not be confined to those working under the patronage of a long-lasting or territorially expansive dynasty. Iran's partitioning in this interregnum has masked a neglect within architectural history which I hope this chapter has gone some way to redress.

Notes:

1. Given the inability of the publisher to incorporate colour reproductions for this chapter, I hope to make them available alongside the article when I post it on aucegypt.academia.edu/BernardOKane. The figures in this chapter are thus limited to those whose reproduction in black-and-white will not detract from the information provided.
2. The colour can vary from yellow to brown. The most detailed exposition of Mozaffarid tilework can be found in Douglas Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework: The Medieval Flowering of Kāshi* (Cranbury NJ/London/Mississauga: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997). Pickett discusses the Ashtarjan mosque on pp. 100–3. I am sceptical of the claim, noted by him, of ‘brown’ (*brun*) tiles being found in the excavations of the Ilkhanid observatory at Maragheh. P. Varjavand, ‘La découverte archéologique du complexe scientifique de l’observatoire de Maragheh’, in *Akten des VII. internationalen Kongresses für iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München, 7.–10. September 1976* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1979), pp. 527–36.
3. André Godard, ‘İsfahān’, *Athār-é Irān* 2 (1937), p. 37.
4. Mary Crane, ‘A Fourteenth-Century Mihrab from Isfahan’, *Ars Islamica* 7 (1940), pp. 96–100.
5. André Godard, ‘Le tombeau de Bābā Kāsem et la madrasa Imāmi’, *Athār-é Irān* 4 (1949), pp. 165–83.
6. Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, p. 122.
7. *Ibid.*, 120–6.
8. Even in the photo in the most recent publication – Sheila Canby, Maryam D. Ekhtiyar, Priscilla Soucek and Navina Najat Haidar, eds, *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), p. 125 – the dark green is almost indistinguishable from the dark blue. My own photographs fortunately show the difference clearly.
9. For the earlier examples, see the Kerman Friday Mosque and Sultan Bakht Agha complex below. A lighter green had earlier been used in the tile mosaic of the tomb of Turabeg Khanom at Kohnah Urgench. For this monument, see Lisa Golombek, ‘The Turabeg Khanom Mausoleum in Konya Urgench: Problems of Attribution’, *Muqarnas* 28 (2011), pp. 133–56. Its tilework has not yet been the subject of a full publication.
10. Anatolian examples include the Karatay madrasa at Konya (1251) and the Gök madrasa at Sivas (1271).
11. Luftallah Hunarfar, *Ganjineh-ye āsār-e tarikhī-ye Esfahān* (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-i Taqafī Mihr-e māh-i, 1350/1970), p. 305.
12. Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, suggests (p. 121) Anatolian influence in the design of the tiled decoration of the north *eyvān* vault; the plain brick ground here is suggestive of the plaster background that characterised much of thirteenth-century Anatolian tile mosaic.
13. Poor-quality *cuerda seca* tiles are found on the spandrels of the arches around the courtyard, probably from the seventeenth century.
14. The date was accepted, but without acknowledgement of the controversy surrounding it, in Stefano Carboni and Tomoko Masuya, *Persian Tiles* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), p. 36, and Canby et al., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art*, pp. 124–6.

15. After the devastation of Kerman at the end of the thirteenth century, it replaced the former Friday Mosque. Lisa Golombek, 'The "Citadel, Town, Suburbs" Model and Medieval Kirman', in Salma K. Jayyusi, ed., *The City in the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), vol. 1, p. 459.
16. The most complete discussion of its tilework to date is Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, pp. 157–60.
17. Gheyāth al-Din Muhammad Khvandamir, *Tārikh-e habib al-siyar* (Tehran: Ketabkhane-ye Khayyam, 1954), vol. 3, pp. 302–3; Hoseynqoli Sotudeh, *Tārikh-e Āl-e Mozaffar* (Tehran: Daneshgah-e Tehran, 1346/1967), vol. 1, p. 115.
18. Godard, 'Iṣfahān', p. 44 notes that the number for the hundreds was missing from the inscription; Hunarfar, *Ganjineh*, correctly interpreted the missing date on historical grounds.
19. Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, pp. 134–5 discusses the earlier literature, although he himself favoured a variety of dates from 1325 to c. 1370.
20. Another nearby double minaret portal from around the same date is the Do Manār Dār al-Battikh (or Dār al-Deyāfeh). Pickett was the first to note that it had tile mosaic with both ochre and green, placing its dating with that the Madraseh-ye Emāmi, discussed above. His colour slides were lost, but I can confirm that green is present in the patches of tile mosaic left on the façade of the monument immediately adjacent to the minaret portal.
21. Bernard O'Kane, 'The Bihbihani *Anthology* and Its Antecedents', *Oriental Art* 45: 4 (1999/2000), pp. 14–16.
22. The date of Muharram 768/1366 is found on an entrance to the north dome chamber; 768 on the inscription on the soffit of the main *eyvān*, and 778/1376 on the mihrab. See Hunarfar, *Ganjineh*, pp. 136–45, 157–8; Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, pp. 155–7; Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 414–17.
23. Hunarfar, *Ganjineh*, p. 139.
24. An early monumental example is that of the Khvaja Ahmad Yasavi complex, running along the top of the wall. See Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, pl. VIIb.
25. Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, p. 155. Pickett proposes the term 'half-rounded monumental *naskhī*', but in fact there are no rounded components in the tiles used. *Bannā'i* Kufic has become a standard term, so here *bannā'i naskh* would convey the appearance of the style better.
26. Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, 1987), pl. 22.3.
27. Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, pp. 148–54; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, pp. 414–17 (catalogue entry by Renata Holod); Sandra Aube, *La céramique dans l'architecture en Iran au xv^e siècle* (Paris: Sorbonne University Press, 2017), pp. 146–7. The unpublished work mentioned in Aube, *La céramique*, p. 146 n. 20 – namely, Amandine Cubaynes, 'L'architecture mozaffaride en Iran au xiv^e siècle', MA thesis, Paris-Sorbonne University – has not been available to me.
28. See the previous note.
29. The Buyan Qoli Khan mausoleum (c. 1361), for instance, is much smaller in scale. See Claus-Peter Haase, 'Buyan Quli Chan – Baudekor', *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 11 (1999), pp. 205–25.
30. He had previously been thought to have worked also at the Saveh Friday Mosque. See Arthur Upham Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, ed. Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 1,168. If this were the case one should infer, not that the Yazd Jāme' was repaired in the Safavid period (its qibla dome chamber has a stucco inscription dated 922/1516–17), but that the construction of the dome chamber of the Saveh Jāme' was made in the

- Mozaffarid period (as I noted in 'Timurid Stucco Decoration', *Annales Islamologiques* 20 [1984], p. 84, n. 4). The former theory was first mooted in Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, p. 151. After noting this correspondence between the craftsmen's names, Pickett ascribed the interior dome revetment of the Yazd Jāme' to 1533. However, the combination of unglazed brick tiles and monochrome-glazed white and light- and dark-blue tiles in a geometric pattern on the exterior of the dome is closer to Mozaffarid style than to any Safavid dome revetment. On my most recent visit to the Saveh Jāme', in 2004, the dome interior was partially obscured by scaffolding – but I was able to read in a pointed oval medallion with white, ochre and light- and dark-blue tile mosaic the following: *amal-e ostād mir Ahmad ibn mir Hājī bannā al-Qomi*. According to a personal communication from Alireza Anisi, for which I am most grateful, no inscription resembling the name Sa'd ibn Muhammad Kaduk al-Yazdi is at present to be found in the dome.
31. Concentrated manganese, the basis of the glaze, will produce a black colour; less concentrated, dark purple.
 32. Medallions with eight Kufic *Muhammads* surrounding six smaller '*Alis*, probably also of the same date, appear on the apex of the vaults adjoining the qibla. See Pickett, *Early Persian Tilework*, pl. 122.
 33. Hunarfar, *Ganjineh*, pp. 529–30.
 34. Canby et al., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art*, cat. no. 66, pp. 107–8 (entry by Priscilla Soucek).
 35. Only the inscription of *Allah* on this part is mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 107.
 36. It has been suggested (*ibid.*, p. 108, n. 1) without further explanation that the names of the twelve imams were added later than the date on the *rahleh*, but I see no good reason why this should be so.
 37. As noted by Soucek (*ibid.*, p. 108, n. 2), an earlier example is the Ashtarjan Jāme' of 1315, and also noted by Pickett: see n. 6, above.
 38. See Bernard O'Kane, 'The Great Jalayirid *Shahnama*', in J. Gonella, F. Weis and C. Rauch, eds, *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 469–84.
 39. Bernard O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting: Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), Appendix 15, pp. 233–53.
 40. The manuscript contains only three of the five poems: blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2013/07/an-illustrated-14th-century-khamsah-by-khvaju-kirmani.html. See also Sheila Blair, *Text and Image in Medieval Persian Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 173–227.
 41. Louis Massignon, *Mission en Mésopotamie* (1907–1908), II: *Épigraphie et topographie historique*, Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 31 (Cairo: l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1912), pp. 1–30; Nāsir al-Naqshbandi, 'al-Madrasa al-Mirjaniyya', *Sumer* 2 (1946), pp. 33–54; Mustafa Jawwād, 'al-Madrasa al-Mirjaniyya', *Sumer* 14 (1958), pp. 27–75; Tariq Jawad al-Janab, *Studies in Medieval Iraqi Architecture* (Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, State Organization of Antiquities and Heritage, 1982), pp. 113–40.
 42. 'Ata al-Hārithi, 'Khan Mirjan', *Sumer* 30 (1974), pp. 163–9; al-Janab, *Studies in Medieval Iraqi Architecture*, pp. 140–6.
 43. The most detailed reconstruction of his biography is in Sheila Blair, 'Artists and Patronage in Late Fourteenth-Century Iran in the Light of Two Catalogues of Islamic Metalwork', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985), pp. 53–9.
 44. Al-Janab, *Studies in Medieval Iraqi Architecture*, p. 114.
 45. *Ibid.*

46. For the date, see Sheila Blair, 'The Madrasa at Zuzan: Islamic Architecture in Eastern Iran on the Eve of the Mongol Invasions', *Muqarnas* 3 (1985), p. 87.
47. M. Useinov, L. Bretanitskii and A. Salamzade, *Istoria arkhitektury Azerbaydzhana* (Moscow: State Publishing House, 1963), pp. 128–35.
48. Al-Janab, *Studies in Medieval Iraqi Architecture*, p. 141. For the development of the *tim*, see Bernard O'Kane, 'The Timurid Bazar and the Origin of the Domed *Tīm*', in Jill Edwards, ed., *Historians in Cairo: Essays in Honor of George Scanlon* (Cairo: Cairo University Press, 2002), pp. 17–28.
49. For example, the impressively large transverse vaults of the audience hall at Qoseyr 'Amra are 7.58 metres wide.
50. Kishwar Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine: Architecture, Religion and Power in Early Modern Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), p. 46; A. H. Morton, 'The Ardabīl Shrine in the Reign of Shāh Ṭahmāsp', *Iran* 12 (1974), p. 54.
51. Huseyn ibn 'Abd al-Zahedi, *Selselāt al-nasab-i safāviyya*, cited in Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, p. 46.
52. Rizvi, *Safavid Dynastic Shrine*, pp. 94, 133.
53. Morton, 'Ardabīl Shrine', p. 48 n. 71.
54. As Morton points out (*ibid.*, pp. 53–4), there have been restorations of the tilework, but a substantial portion of the original was still present at the time of Sarre's visit. See Friedrich Sarre, *Denkmäler Persischer Baukunst* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1901), p. 11, Fig. 38, pls 48, 51: digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/sarre1901tafeln/0008/scroll?sid=77fdd405e05cc96ad635b3230686a35f.
55. Gheyāth al-Din Muhammad Khvāndamir, *Tārikh-i Habib al-siyar*, ed. J. Homā'i, 4 vols (Tehran: Khayyam, 1333/1954) – transl. W. M. Thackston as *Habibu's-seyar*, Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures, 24, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Harvard University, 1994) – text vol. 4, pp. 422–4; tr. vol. 2, pp. 560–1; Patrick Wing, *The Jalayirids* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 103, 151.
56. Bernard O'Kane, 'Domestic and Religious Architecture in Cairo: Mutual Influences', in Doris Behrens-Abouseif, ed., *The Cairo Heritage: Essays in Honor of Laila Ali Ibrahim* (Cairo: Cairo University Press, 2001), pp. 157–9.
57. Blair, *Text and Image*, Fig. 5.1.
58. Lisa Golombek, 'The Chronology of Turbat-i Shaikh Jam', *Iran* 9 (1971), pp. 27–44; Ya'qub Daneshdust, 'Nekāti dar bare-ye maqāleh-ye majmu'eh-ye tārikhi-ye Torbāt-i Jām', *Farhang-e Irān Zamin* 24 (1361/1985), pp. 58–74; Bernard O'Kane, 'Naṭanz and Turbat-i Jām: New Light on Fourteenth-Century Iranian Stucco', *Studia Iranica* 21 (1992), pp. 85–92; Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), cat. no. 118; Shivan Mahendrarajah, 'A Revised History of Mongol, Kart, and Timurid Patronage of the Shrine of Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad-i Jām', *Iran* 54 (2016), pp. 135–56.
59. First published in Daneshdust, 'Nekāti', p. 58.
60. I. F. Borodina, 'Inter'er mavzolei Abu-Saida bliz Meana (Turkmeniya)', *Arkhiturnoe Nasledstvo* 18 (1969), pp. 181–9; Leonard Harrow, 'The Tomb Complex of Abu Sa'id Fadl Allah b. Abi'l-Khair at Mihna', *Iran* 43 (2005), pp. 197–215; Mukhammed A. Mamedov, *Arkhiturnye kompleks Meana-Baba: Sufiskii mavzolei Tscentral'noi Azii kak obekt iskusstva* (St Petersburg, 2008).
61. Harrow, 'Tomb Complex', pp. 198–9.
62. The form is even more emblematic of turning than those previously noted in tilework in the Mozaffarid monuments. In the context of these Sufi-oriented buildings, one might therefore connect it with the *charkh-e gardun*, the whirling wheel, which 'has a central position in the symbolism and cosmology of *sama*'

- (whirling dances) and Sufi music'. See Saeid Khaghani, *Islamic Architecture in Iran: Poststructural Theory and the Architectural History of Iranian Mosques* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), p. 212, n. 116.
63. Yuka Kadoi, 'Aspects of Frescoes in Fourteenth-Century Iranian Architecture: The Case of Yazd', *Iran* 43 (2005), Fig. 26. This is extremely similar to the drawing of a flowering vase on a stand in one of the Istanbul albums. See Bernard O'Kane, 'Poetry, Geometry and the Arabesque: Notes on Timurid Aesthetics', *Annales Islamologiques* 26 (1992), pl. 14b. I would therefore now date the drawing to the fourteenth century, rather than the fifteenth, as I have previously suggested.
 64. Bernard O'Kane, 'The Development of Iranian *Cuerda Seca* Tiles and the Transfer of Tilework Technology', in Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, eds, *And Diverse Are Their Hues* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 179.
 65. One commentator, after the lecture on which this chapter is based, suggested that it might be possible to resolve this problem by dating the lustre tiles to the first, pre-fourteenth-century stage of building. This is not impossible, but would push the dating of the earlier stage (whether eleventh or twelfth century, or indeed both) much later than is usually thought.
 66. Harrow, 'Tomb Complex', Fig. 12. My own photograph of this area, taken in 2008, shows that all of the decoration on the left side of the wall (including the fragmentary medallion) and within the niche was lost by then.
 67. O'Kane, 'Naʿanz and Turbat-i Jām', pp. 89–90; Mahendrarajah, 'Revised History', p. 25.
 68. O'Kane, 'Naʿanz and Turbat-i Jām', p. 90. I should correct my embarrassing description in that text of the comparative stucco material at the Varamin Jami' as 'blossoming roses'; it is, rather, a uniquely three-dimensional rendering of chinoiserie blossoms.
 69. Bernard O'Kane, 'The Tomb of Muḥammad Ġāzī at Fūšang', *Annales Islamologiques* 21 (1985), pp. 113–28.
 70. Claus-Peter Haase, 'Herat: An Islamic Metropolis', in Ute Franke, ed., *National Museum Heart: Areia Antiqua Through Time* (Berlin: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Berlin, 2008), pp. 19–27; Ute Franke, 'Ancient Herat Revisited: New Data from Recent Archaeological Fieldwork', in Rocco Rante, ed., *Greater Khorasan, Studies in the History and Culture of the Middle East* 29 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), p. 72 – available online at academia.edu; Ute Franke, C.-P. Haase and R. Keller, *Ancient Herat: A Journey through Time. The Collections of the National Museum and Archive in Herat* (Herat/Berlin: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Berlin, 2012), pp. 52–3; Claus-Peter Haase, 'A Princely Cenotaph', in Ute Franke and Martina Müller-Wiener, eds, *Herat Through Time: The Collections of the Herat Museum and Archive* (Berlin: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Berlin, 2016), pp. 372–89. Many of the fragments that were in the mausoleum at the time of my publication are now in the Sabah collection, Kuwait.
 71. For details of these, see O'Kane, 'Tomb of Muḥammad Ġāzī', pp. 120–3.
 72. Robert Hillenbrand, 'The Use of Glazed Tilework in Iranian Islamic Architecture', in *Akten des VII. internationalen Kongresses für iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München, 7.–10. September 1976* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1979), pp. 545–54.

Persian Narrative Poetry in the Eighth/Fourteenth to Early Ninth/Fifteenth Centuries and the Legacy of Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmeḥ

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The early ninth/fifteenth century heralded the final phase in a lengthy process of canonisation of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* and its author in courtly and folk literature. Intensified by an unprecedented interest in Ferdowsi's epic during the Mongol period, the process took multiple forms. The *Shāhnāmeḥ*'s verse and subject-matter were copiously interpolated, on the one hand, into court historiographical works in prose – as in *Tārikh-e jahāngoshāy* by Joveyni (composed 650–58/1252–60), or the part on Iran in *Jāme' al-tavārikh* by Rashid al-Din (compiled 700–10/1300–10) – and, on the other, into folk prose literature of the *dāstān* genre.¹ The production of the *Shāhnāmeḥ*'s illustrated manuscripts proliferated.²

At least two attempts were made to bring out comprehensive redactions of the epic – one prepared single-handedly by Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi Qazvini (d. ca. 744/1344),³ and the other produced on the orders of the Timurid Bāysonghor Mirzā (completed in 833/1430). The expanded preface to the Bāysonghori redaction ushered in the final shaping of the legendary biography of Ferdowsi, the foundations for which were laid as early as 550–52/1155–57 by Nezāmi 'Aruzi in his *Chahār maqāleh*.⁴ Even more importantly, the canonical status of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* is borne out by a considerable number of historical and religious-historical epics directly emulating Ferdowsi's poem – some of which are extant, others known by title only – as well as by satirical use of the poet's work.

Although broadly accurate, the picture just presented does not remotely communicate the nuanced complexity of the epic's reception. One may ask, for example, what the canonical status of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* precisely entails, and whether any attempts were made to undermine it. Why, given the efflorescent historiographical prose writing in the period under discussion, was there a need

to compose versified histories in the *Shāhnāme* vein? Where did the poets following in the footsteps of the *Shāhnāme* locate themselves in relation to the canonical text and its author? Did the *Shāhnāme*, for example, affect the development of ethnic literatures, such as the Judeo-Persian? In this chapter, I offer a look at these issues by examining three bodies of narrative poetry from the standpoint of their intertextual relationships with Ferdowsi's poem: (1) historical epics, including religious; (2) burlesque emulations of Ferdowsi's work; (3) biblical epic poems of Shāhin in classical Judeo-Persian.

1. *Historical and Religious–Historical Epics*

a) *The corpus*

Table 12.1 registers, in chronological order, the extant corpus of historical and religious–historical epics from the late seventh/thirteenth to the second half of the eighth/fourteenth centuries.⁵

As Table 12.1 shows, in thematic terms, historical epics may encompass dynastic history or present a mixture of religious and dynastic subject-matter. Dynastic history is represented by at least three varieties: it can be regional, like *Fotuh al-salātin* by 'Esāmi, which chronicles the rule of the Muslim dynasties in India, and specifically in Deccan, from the Ghaznavids to the early Bahmanids; it can cover a specific dynasty, like Sāheb's *Daftār-e delgoshā*, which sets out the history of the Shabānkāreh rulers of Fars; or it can celebrate a specific ruler, like the *Ghāzānnāme*. The *Zafarnāme* and the *Homāyunnāme* are examples of works that combine religious and dynastic history with a universal touch.⁶ It is worth noting that post-Ilkhanid dynasties, such as the Injuids, the Mozaffarids and the Jalayerids, seem not to have generated versified epic output of the type discussed here, despite their flourishing patronage of the production of illuminated *Shāhnāme* manuscripts.⁷

On the basis of the data presented in the table, it seems reasonable to state that the majority of the authors who chose to versify any kind of chronological sequence of historical, quasi-historical or religious–historical events, selected – as if by default – the *Shāhnāme* as a template. This does not mean that the *Shāhnāme* was necessarily perceived as an historical text or source;⁸ rather, it was the structural layout of Ferdowsi's epic in the form of a continuous and consecutive succession of rulers and dynasties, in conjunction with its canonical status, that established the *Shāhnāme* as the most, if not the only, suitable model for versified, chronologically arranged histories. At the same time, it would be a fallacy to present the *Shāhnāme*'s reception as a smooth and irenic process devoid of tensions or ambiguity.

Title	Author	Dating	Patron/ dedicatee	Poetic metre and number of verses	Type of composition
1 <i>Homāyunnāmeḥ</i> ⁹	Hakim Zajjāji (ca. 608–76/1211–77 or 608–97/1211–98) ¹⁰	second half of the 7th/13th century	Shams al-Din Muhammad Joveyni (d. 683/1284) and Malek Sadr al-Din (d. not later than 676/1277) ¹¹ are praised	<i>motaqāreb</i> ; ~ 60,000 verses	religious and dynastic history
2 <i>Kartnāmeḥ</i> ¹²	Rabī‘i Pushangi/Bushanjī (671–702/1272–1302)	composed between 695/1295 and 701/1301	the work was commissioned by Malek Fakhr al-Din Kart (r. 697–706/1297–1306)	<i>motaqāreb</i> ; 271 disparate verses cited in <i>Tārikhnāmeḥ-ye Herāt</i> ¹³	regional dynastic history
3 <i>Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Chengizī</i> ¹⁴	Shams al-Din Kāshāni	completed ca. 706/1306	allegedly commissioned by Ghazan Khan; Rashid al-Din and Öljeitü are praised	<i>motaqāreb</i> ; ~ 10,000 verses	dynastic history
4 <i>Tārikh-e Mohammadi</i> ¹⁵	Hasan Kāshi ¹⁶	completed 708/1308	dedicated to the Ilkhan Öljeitü; Rashid al-Din is praised ¹⁷	<i>hazaj akhrab maqbuz mahzuf</i> ; ~ 2,340 verses	religious history
5 <i>Daftar-e delgoshā</i> ¹⁸	Sāheb ¹⁹	begun in 720/1320	dedicated to Nezām al-Din Tayyeb Shāh Shabānkāreyi (r. 688–725/1289–1325)	<i>motaqāreb</i> ; ~ 11,000 verses	dynastic history

6	<i>Zafarnāmeh</i> ²⁰	Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi Qazvini (ca. 680– 744/1281–1344) ²¹	completed 735/1334	Ilkhan Abu Sa‘id (d. 736/1335) is praised ²²	<i>motaqāreb</i> ;~ 75,000 verses	religious and dynastic history
7	<i>Shāhanshāhnāme</i> <i>h-ye Tabrizi</i> ²³	Ahmad Tabrizi	completed 738/1337–8	commissioned by Ilkhan Abu Sa‘id; dedicated to Abu Sa‘id, Shaykh Hasan Jalāyer and Mas‘ud Shāh ²⁴	<i>motaqāreb</i> ;~ 17,000 verses	dynastic history
8	<i>Fotuh al-salātin</i> ²⁵	‘Abd al-Malek ‘Esāmi	completed 751/1350	dedicated to ‘Alā al-Dīn Hasan Bahman Shāh the Bahmanid (r. 748-59/1347-58)	<i>motaqāreb</i> ;~ 12,000 verses	dynastic history
9	<i>Ghāzānāmeh</i> ²⁶	Khvājah Nur al- Din b. Shams al- Din Muhammad Azhdari (Nuri Azhdari) ²⁷	completed in 763/1362	dedicated to (and probably commissioned by) Sultan Oveys b. Hasan the Jalayerid (r. 756–76/1355–74) and an unnamed vizier ²⁸	<i>motaqāreb</i> ;8,709 verses	dynastic history

Table 12.1. Extant historical and religious-historical epics from the late seventh/thirteenth to the second half of the eighth/fourteenth centuries.

In what follows, I first chart common patterns of intertextual relationships that the authors of the narrative poems chose to forge using their model; I then map out certain authors' ambiguous attitude towards – even disapproval of – Ferdowsi's epic, and its possible motives; finally, I examine why versified histories continued to be composed despite the dominant presence of historical writing in prose on the literary scene of the time.

b) Forms of intertextual relationship

Perusal of the corpus above shows that, with the exception of the *Tārikh-e Mohammadi* (no. 4 in Table 12.1, discussed in detail below), all the poems are couched in the *motaqāreb* metre, which serves as the primary formal indicator to suggest their immediate intertextual connection with the *Shāhnāme*, for author and audience alike. The metre activates a distinct set of linguistic and stylistic patterns, including a specific vocabulary and linguistic register characteristic of Ferdowsi's work. A typical example is the *Homāyunnāme*, which is replete with words and expressions originating in the *Shāhnāme*.²⁹ Even more illustrative in this regard would be the purist attitude taken by the author of the *Shāhanshāhnāme-ye Tabrizi* (Table 12.1, no. 7), who from the outset declares his determination to avoid using Arabic vocabulary (*naguyam beh-joz pārsi-yo dari*)³⁰ and emphasises his accomplishment in this matter in the closing lines of the poem, stating that 'there is not a single Arabic [word] in it except for names' (*yek-i nist joz nām-e tāzi dar-u*).³¹ At the same time, he clearly challenges the linguistic purity of Ferdowsi's work: 'My land is pure, and so is [my] speech; / I am from Tabriz, not from the country of Khorasan' (*ma-rā khāk-e pāk-o sakhun in chonin / zeh Tabriz, nah az Khorāsān zamin*; *ibid.*), concluding that 'none has ever used such pure Persian' (*chunin pārsi kas nagoft-ast pāk*; *ibid.*).³² A slightly different but no less characteristic tendency is manifest in the *Ghāzānnāme* (Table 12.1, no. 9). Unlike Ahmad Tabrizi's purism, Nuri Azhdari employs the rich arsenal of Turco-Mongol and Arabic vocabulary; at the same time, however, he peppers his poem with archaic Persian words that were likely to have been incomprehensible to Persian speakers by the end of the fifth/eleventh century, most of them being listed and explained in the lexicographical dictionary *Loghat-i Fors* of Asadi Tusi (d. 465/1072–73). Moreover, Nuri Azhdari, himself of western Iranian provenance and possibly a native of Tabriz, has a predilection for using – sometimes completely incorrectly – obsolete eastern Iranian dialect words, which he must have culled from the *Loghat-e Fors* and other lexicological dictionaries, in order to stylise his work according to the *Shāhnāme*'s linguistic register – or rather, his own notion of it.³³

In addition to giving rise to various lingua-stylistic intertextual relationships, the recourse to the *motaqāreb* metre furnishes the authors of historical and religious–historical narrative poems with a broadly evocative frame of reference – whether explicit mention of the *Shāhnāme*'s heroes and their deeds, the use of epic imagery, replication of scenes and motifs, thematic

parallels, or the stylisation and interpolation of *Shāhnāme* verses by way of *tazmīn* (the insertion of borrowed lines with or without acknowledgement of authorship).³⁴

At the same time, the close and multifaceted intertextual connections that our corpus forges with the *Shāhnāme* do not imply a uniformly affirmative reception of the epic. Two distinct response patterns emerge from perusal of the corpus: one of adoption and continuation, and one of contestation and substitution.

Adoption and continuation

The most patent expression of the poets' unreserved adoption of the *Shāhnāme* is their direct declaration of Ferdowsi as their model. Mostowfi Qazvini, whose reverence for Ferdowsi's genius is evident from the comprehensive redaction of the *Shāhnāme* he undertook,³⁵ discloses his attitude in greater detail in a chapter of his *Zafarnāme*, titled 'On the Reasons for Composing the Book'. He humbly states that, only after being persuaded by his friends, who had witnessed him successfully complete his redaction of the *Shāhnāme*, did he dare to compose an historical work in the *Shāhnāme* vein. Qazvini prays for Ferdowsi's intercession (*eltejā*), and declares himself his follower.³⁶ He sees his *Zafarnāme* as a chronological continuation of Ferdowsi's epic, and consequently goes to some pains to justify his decision to move back in time and relate the feats of the Prophet. He apologises as follows:

Even if in a way I trespassed ['overlapped with'] Ferdowsi,
perhaps the wise would not rebuke me [for this].
For when I'll versify the deeds of the Prophet,
I'll benefit from that in both worlds.³⁷

Yet another example of the same reception pattern can be found in the *Daftar-e delgoshā*, by Sāheb (Table 12.1, no. 5). The exordium praising God is followed by a lengthy chapter in which Ferdowsi appears to the author in a dream prompting him to versify a story as a reply (*javāb*) to the *Shāhnāme* in such a way that, from then on, 'nobody would ever be able to compose a reply' to Sāheb's work.³⁸ Ferdowsi further exhorts Sāheb to 'cleanse his heart' from envy of him and to compose his epic in his – Ferdowsi's – manner from the time of Yazdegerd onwards.³⁹ Thus, from the very start, Sāheb assumes the adoption pattern, perceiving Ferdowsi as his guide (*rahnomāy*), and his *Daftar-e delgoshā* as a stylistic and thematic continuation of the *Shāhnāme*: indeed, Sāheb narrates the history of the Iranian Shabānkāreh rulers from the outset of their dynasty after the Islamic conquest up to his own times. Interestingly, Sāheb draws the lines of affinity between himself and Ferdowsi on a biographical plane, too: referring again to his dream, this time in the concluding section of the epic, Sāheb puts into Ferdowsi's mouth bitter complaints against the ingratitude of Mahmud, and words of advice not to put faith in benefactors

but in God alone – which might reflect Sāheb's own disillusion with his dedicatee Nezām al-Din Hasan b. Tayyeb Shāh (r. 688–725/1289–1325).⁴⁰

The Ferdowsi–Mahmud axis reappears, with a different emphasis, in 'Esāmi's *Fotuh al-salātin* (Table 12.1, no. 8), and forges a potent link, thematic and extra-narrative, between the *Shāhnāme* and 'Esāmi's epic on the Muslim rulers of India. More than once, 'Esāmi brings up the theme of Mahmud's response to Ferdowsi's poem to underscore his belief that the best remuneration for composing a poem would be to be remembered, rather than material profit.⁴¹ To establish, somewhat artificially, a chronological sequence with the *Shāhnāme*, 'Esāmi explains that:

the old man of Tus started [his poem] from Adam [= Gayumars] ... and finished it with the chivalrous Mahmud; in this blessed poem of mine I first curtly mentioned in the preface [the period from Adam to Mahmud] and then detailed in months and years [the events] from the period of Mahmud to the time of the Shāh [i.e. 'Alā al-Din Hasan Bahman Shāh].⁴²

'Esāmi proclaims himself Ferdowsi's follower (*peyrow*), but, significantly, in contrast with the compositions discussed above, Ferdowsi is only one of the role models of the author of the *Fotuh al-salātin*, the other being Nezāmi and his *Khamseh*:

Many a verse from both the *Shāhnāme* and the *Khamseh*
I recorded in this poem in the form of *tazmīn*;
so that under the influence of their good fortune
this story [of mine] will be received favourably in the world.⁴³

Furthermore, while recognising Ferdowsi and Nezāmi as the two unsurpassed masters of the *masnavi* genre,⁴⁴ 'Esāmi clearly favours Nezāmi – the latter appears to him in a dream (as Ferdowsi did to Sāheb) and inspires him to compose the poem.⁴⁵ 'Esāmi's preference might simply reflect the poet's personal taste, or could be indicative of a shift in the local reception of Ferdowsi and Nezāmi and their works in India – with respect to western Iran, for example – towards the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century. This conjecture warrants further research. Be that as it may, the example of the *Fotuh al-salātin* and its author's uneasy balancing act between the two authorities, and his ultimate choice of the *Shāhnāme* mould, seem to corroborate my contention that the latter is the default option for versified, chronologically arranged histories in the period under discussion.

Contestation and substitution

The contestation-and-substitution pattern implies a double-edged attitude towards Ferdowsi's epic: approval of its poetic and stylistic merits goes hand in hand with contestation of its authority on the grounds of its contents. This kind of reception is characteristic of the authors who composed historical works with

a strong religious component – although, as demonstrated by the case of the *Zafarnāmeḥ*, itself a religious–historical epic, one should avoid generalisation.

An exemplar for this reception pattern would be Hakim Zajjāji's *Homāyunnāmeḥ*. While praising Ferdowsi profusely for his poetic mastery,⁴⁶ the author devotes a passage of some eighty verses to refuting the value of the *Shāhnāmeḥ*'s subject-matter. Zajjāji rhetorically cautions himself (as well as his addressees) against the tales of Iranian heroes, emphasising the advantages of narrating and reading about Muslim champions:

Go and renounce [the story of] Dastān,
 turn to Mortazā's valour!
 Relay the bravery of Zu al-Feqār's Owner,
 destroy Heydar's foes!
 Tell about 'Osmān, do not narrate about Rostam!
 With the polo-stick seize the ball from the Sun.
 Pursue the heroes of Islam,
 relate about 'Omar's warfare, not about Sām's.
 Reveal the leadership of Seddiq,
 why tell of Rostam and Esfandeyār?
 Do not relate [the story of] Ārash, his bow and arrows,
 tell about the virtuous Sa'd.
 Recount about Khāled, that honorable youth,
 why relate the tale of the aged Narimān?
 And if you tell about Hamzeh's bravery,
 do not mention either Dastān or Tahamtan.
 Do not mention Bahrām or Rohhām,
 let the bravery of them both be nothing [in your eyes];
 Listen to Talheh's valorous deeds,
 read about his feasts in every battle-field

....

Do not say another word about Rostam, Zāl and Sām,
 do not indulge yourself in fairy-tales ...⁴⁷

He reiterates the perils for a good Muslim of reading pre-Islamic tales:

makhān ān k-az-ān dideh tireh shavad
darun-e del-at niz tireh shavad
moghi kardi ān gāh-o ze-tireh migh
*bebārad yaqin bar sar-at gorz-o tigh*⁴⁸

Do not read [those tales] from which your eyes lose their sight [lit.,
 become dark]
 and the inside of your heart darkens;

Otherwise you turn into a fire-worshiper, and out of the dark cloud
maces and swords will pour upon your head sure enough.

In addition to his objection to the *Shāhnāme*'s non-Islamic contents, Hakim Zajjāji censures its lack of veracity: targeting specific stories as *afsāneh* invented by Ferdowsi ('he contrived those tales out of his own nature/genius [*tab*]'), he counterposes them to the dependable Islamic narratives based on the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, and the Stories of the Prophets (*akhbār-hā*).⁴⁹ This kind of critical attitude towards the non-Islamic and non-historical contents of the *Shāhnāme*, and the subsequent attempt to offset them with the Islamic narrative, did not originate with the author of the *Homāyunnāme*, but can be traced back as early as 482/1089, to the '*Alināme* by Rabī', which is believed to be the first Shi'i epic.⁵⁰ However, notwithstanding the rhetorical similarity between the two and their polemical stance,⁵¹ the scope of '*Alināme* is limited to praising 'Ali's feats and providing a pious alternative to the popular interest in heroic tales. Zajjāji's undertaking is far more ambitious: while employing the *Shāhnāme*'s structural and stylistic conventions, he strives to substitute and supersede the pre-Islamic epic with a 'true' Islamic narrative, thus challenging the *Shāhnāme*'s canonical authority.

A prime manifestation of Zajjāji's subversive approach to Ferdowsi's epic would be his treatment of pre-Islamic Iranian kings. In a relevant section of the *Homāyunnāme*, he distances himself from Ferdowsi's narrative, clearly preferring other, 'historical' sources: the number of years allotted to each king overlaps with the *Shāhnāme* only partially;⁵² the Ashkāneyān section, almost non-existent in the *Shāhnāme*, is quite extensive;⁵³ the narratives differ significantly from their counterparts in Ferdowsi's epic, betraying parallel traditions. Thus, for example, the depiction of Tahmuras in the *Homāyunnāme* lacks the traits of a cultural hero typical of him in the *Shāhnāme*, and revolves around his activity as a builder, as well as around the emergence of idol worship, fasting, asceticism and religious openness during his reign;⁵⁴ almost half of the section devoted to Jamshid's reign is given to the description of Jamshid building a sturdy bridge on the Tigris, its later destruction by Iskandar out of envy of Jamshid's mastery, and Ardashir's attempt to rebuild it;⁵⁵ in the Dārāb section, Zajjāji has nothing to say about Dārāb's unusual childhood, his wars with the Arabs, or his fathering Iskandar, but he dwells instead on Dārāb's role as the founder of pigeon-post – a detail completely absent from the *Shāhnāme*⁵⁶ – and so on. Echoing to the conventions of universal Islamic histories, such as al-Tabari's or Hamzeh al-Esfahāni's, Zajjāji intertwines Iranian history with the history of the prophets.⁵⁷ Moreover, in line with his criticism of the *Shāhnāme*'s lack of veracity, the author of the *Homāyunnāme* plunges into the rationalisation of mythical detail, such as the two snakes growing from Zakhāk's shoulders. According to him, and contrary to common belief kindled by Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāme*, these were two painful

furuncles (*dombal*) that appeared as a result of Zakhāk's gluttony, for 'the wise know that snakes / cannot grow from the shoulders of a king'.⁵⁸

It is only natural that contesting the *Shāhnāme*'s authority, as observed in the *Homāyunnāme* and other religious–historical epics,⁵⁹ would bring about attempts to loosen the formal 'shackles' of the canonical model, chiefly through replacement of the *motaqāreb* metre. In his *Tārikh-e Mohammadi* (Table 12.1, no. 4), devoted to the history of Muhammad and the twelve imams, Hasan Kāshi explains that, despite the impeccability of Ferdowsi's versification in the *motaqāreb* metre, and the convention of his time that dictated composing versified histories in the manner of the *Shāhnāme*, he does not intend to follow in that vein: 'I did not roam around the threshold of [Ferdowsi's] verse' (*gerd-e dar-e nazm-e u nagashtam*), he states, and chooses to couch his poem in the *hazaj* metre.⁶⁰ Hasan Kāshi's aversion to the mendacious and non-Islamic substance of the *Shāhnāme* becomes obvious from the didactic introduction to another of his works, the *Ma' refatnāme*, in which he exclaims, 'Till when will you read the *Shāhnāme*!' (*chand kh'āni ketāb-e Shahnāme*), emphatically cautioning his addressee in a manner similar to the authors of the *Alināme* and the *Homāyunnāme*, above:

O, [my] son, do not read fictitious tales!
Beware, beware of reading them!

....

Till when will you relate the tales of Rostam, son of Zāl,
[these] frivolities and fictional senseless lies!
Till when will you read to Muslims
the stories about *gabrs* and the people of *ostudān* [i.e. Zoroastrians].⁶¹

Furthermore, he ranks Ferdowsi's epic – in terms of its harmfulness – alongside *Vāmeq-o 'Azrā* and *Vis-o Rāmin*, the two romantic poems based on pre-Islamic sources that used to evoke the indignation of rigorous Muslim writers on account of their alleged immorality.⁶²

Thus, in his *Tārikh-e Mohammadi*, Hasan Kāshi dared defy the 'burden' of the canonical model (*man modda 'i-yam vali na kazzāb*,⁶³ he proclaims: 'I am a claimant, but not a deceiver') in an attempt to break from the tradition and introduce a different formal model for writing religious–historical narrative poems. Although theoretically his efforts can be perceived as undermining the canonical status of Ferdowsi's epic, in practice they appear to have been an ineffectual undertaking, since the *Shāhnāme* continued to be a primary model for the composition of both historical and religious–historical narrative poetry, to which religious epics such as Ebn Hosām's *Khāvarānnāme* (completed 830/1426–27) or Bāzel Mashhadi's *Hamleh-ye Heydari* (completed late eleventh/sixteenth century) bear eloquent testimony.⁶⁴

c) *Ferdowsi's canonical standing; or, why render history in verse?*

The flourishing tradition of historical writing during the Mongol period established prose as the most common and effective vehicle for transmitting historical information and shaping concepts and ideas.⁶⁵ And yet, as my corpus shows, from the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century onwards, the composition of versified histories was also on the ascendancy. Two major reasons can be adduced for the choice of verse. The first relates to the status traditionally accorded to the two media in the Persian literary system: verse is deemed superior, since it demands special skills and a natural gift, and is more rigorous and hard-wrought, while prose is casual and commonplace. As Mostowfi Qazvini puts it in the introductory chapter of his *Zafarnāmeḥ*,

vali nasr-rā hast meydān farākh
tavānad dar u har kas-i sākht kākḥ
nabāyad dar u bord besyār ranj
*chu vazn-i nadārad tu z-in dar maranj*⁶⁶

Prose, however, has a broad square;
 everyone can build a palace on it.

It does not require too much toiling;
 since there is no metre, do not labour on it

This stated preference for verse led authors to conclude that efforts invested in poetic rather than prose composition would assure their work lasting popularity, and hold out the hope of immortalising not only their own names but also those of their dedicatees. I note in passing that this claim did not stand the test of time: neither of the works in the corpus registered in Table 12.1 received wide dissemination, some of them surviving in only a single manuscript.⁶⁷

The second rationale for rendering history in verse has to do with its reception. Mostowfi Qazvini and Hasan Kāshi, for example, assert an overall preference for poetry among not only connoisseurs, but also simple people, for whom, unlike prose, it is readily comprehensible and does not induce tedium (*malālat*).⁶⁸ As a result, according to our authors, poetry is more widely diffused than prose compositions, has a greater impact on audiences, and thus possesses a more lasting emotive function.

An instructive example of the interplay between historical writing in prose and verse in the late seventh/thirteenth and early eighth/fourteenth centuries is provided by Shams al-Dīn Kāshāni, in a detailed chapter on the composition of his *Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Chengizi* (Table 12.1, no. 3). Kāshāni describes how one day – during a royal *majles* at which Ghazan Khan, Rashid al-Dīn, Jeksān (i.e. Bolad Ch'eng-hsiang, the Yüan envoy at the Ilkhanid court) and other notables, whom he terms *mubādān*, were present – the Mongol ruler expresses his wish to find a poet who is able to immortalise his ancestors in verse:

Now I need a speech-nourisher [*sokhan-parvar-i*]
 who would create a book by my order,
 which will be filled with wisdom, words of advice and allusions
 and all the people would profit from it.
 He should versify the deeds of our forefathers,
 of our blessed nobles and pure-spirited [heroes],
 so that with the help of the flowing verse,
 life would enter their bodies.
 Our forefathers will return to life, and we
 remain alive.⁶⁹

Bolad volunteers to share his oral accounts on the ‘history of the kings’ (*tārikh-e shāhān*), but warns of his inability to versify them (*vali nazm kār-e kas-i degar-ast*). Ghazan then entrusts the compilation of the prose version to Rashid al-Din, with the principal aim of further rendering it in Persian verse (*be-nasr ān sokhan-hā cho gerd āvari / dar-ārand az ān pas be-nazm-e dari*). After several years of effort, Rashid al-Din finally completes his work, and only then does Shams al-Din Kāshāni embark on the versification of the Mongol sections of the *Jāme‘ al-tavārikh*.⁷⁰

Kāshāni’s representation of the *Jāme‘ al-tavārikh* as the prose draft for a versified version, although of questionable veracity,⁷¹ is indicative of two major tendencies among authors of historical poems during the period under discussion. On the one hand, they perceive an historical work in prose as inferior to a versified composition: history in prose, full of detail and frequently replete with non-Iranian names, is too complicated and tedious, and is meant for scholars rather than for common consumption. On the other hand, the poets can hardly dispense with prose histories, for they provide a factual foundation for their epics, granting them historical authenticity.⁷² Thus, like Kāshāni’s work, the Mongol part of Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi’s *Zafarnāme* and Nuri Azhdari’s *Ghāzānnāme* are based mostly on the *Jāme‘ al-tavārikh*,⁷³ while the earlier *Homāyunnāme* seems to have utilised Joveyni’s *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshāy* for its Mongol portion.⁷⁴

Besides highlighting the dependence of the historical epics on prose histories, Kāshāni’s account, if interpreted critically, seems to be symptomatic of a poet–patron relationship – or more correctly, the lack thereof. Kāshāni takes great pains to suggest that Ghazan Khan himself commissioned the work, claiming that the *Jāme‘ al-tavārikh* was merely preparation for a larger undertaking. In fact, his depiction of the commissioning process reflects the actual circumstances of entrusting Rashid al-Din with compiling the history of the Mongols, as attested by other sources, none of which mentions its further versification.⁷⁵ Kāshāni’s pretence thus acquires an apologetic stance, betraying an attempt to camouflage the lack of patronage on behalf of the ruler. Significantly, a survey of the works in Table 12.1 shows that, with the exception of the *Kartnāme*, Ahmad Tabrizi’s *Shāhanshāhnāme*, and, with

some probability, Nuri Azhdari's *Ghāzānnāmeḥ*, the remaining six epics were not properly commissioned, and were most likely composed in anticipation of an ex post facto remuneration by their dedicatees – an expectation that might well have been misguided, as was the case with the *Daftar-e delgoshā*, for example. Comprehensive research into the patterns of patronage across literary genre borders is needed in order to determine whether this evidence is merely accidental, or whether in fact it indicates the absence of court patronage for poets composing historical and religious–historical narratives in the *Shāhnāmeḥ* vein during the period under discussion.

Historical and religious–historical epics, then, were the most numerous and direct manifestations of an intertextual connection with the *Shāhnāmeḥ*. This genre was able to fulfil a host of functions that historical prose writing was for the most part unable to fulfil: first, the epics presented historical material in a digestible manner, thus serving a propaedeutic function; second, they elicited in their audience what is known in folklore studies as ‘traditional referentiality’, evoking the entire epic tradition epitomised in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*; third, they possessed a clear literary–aesthetic function, wherein language is appreciated as an object of aesthetic distinction in itself, rather than as an instrument for conveying messages and information. Taken together, these factors would adequately explain the propensity for historical epics alongside historical works in prose, as well as their points of variance with their prose counterparts.

2. *Burlesque Emulations of the Shāhnāmeḥ*

The burlesque emulations of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* belong to a larger domain of satirical poetry (*hajv/hazl*); they are based on the deployment of the *javāb* practice for the purpose of mockery, pillory, or light-hearted criticism, and often designated in Persian poetics as *naqizeh*.⁷⁶ In the third chapter of his *Akhllāq al-ashrāf*, devoted to the virtue of chastity (or decency: *dar ‘effat*), ‘Obeyd Zākāni (d. ca. 770/1370) includes a ten-line ribald poem in the *Shāhnāmeḥ* form and style, which describes the combat between the Iranian Rostam and the Turanian Homān in terms of violent homosexual acts.⁷⁷ The epic imagery and epithets, such as *yal-e arjmand* (‘valiant hero’), *hezhabr-e delir* (‘fearless lion’) and *shamshir-zan* (‘sword-striking hero’), are used side by side with coarse, even obscene vocabulary; mixing linguistic registers compounds the satirical effect, which is further intensified by quoting in the final *beyt* the *mesrā*‘ borrowed from Ferdowsi’s epic (*hamān beh keh niki bovad yādīgār*; it’s preferable that virtuousness will remain as [your] memory).⁷⁸

A much more extensive emulation of Ferdowsi’s epic in a burlesque mode was composed by Abu Eshāq Hallāj, better known as Boshāq At‘emeh Shirazi (d. ca. 830/1427). Boshāq spent most of his life in Shiraz writing poetry and prose permeated with culinary themes, hence his pen-name – Boshāq-e At‘emeh.⁷⁹ His collection of works comprises several prose treatises

interspersed with verse and some 230 poems in various genres, ghazal being the dominant one.⁸⁰ The overwhelming majority of the poems are parodical responses, *naqizeh*, to twenty-four master-poets of the seventh/thirteenth to early ninth/fifteenth centuries, among whom Hafiz, Sa'di, Salmān Sāveji and Hasan Dehlavi loom large. Among his works there are also two longer poems in *masnavi* form, one of which clearly imitates general epic conventions, and the key elements of the *Shāhnāme* in particular, on both structural and thematic levels. The poem comprises 238 *beyts*, and is entitled 'Dāstān-e Moza'far-o Boghrā' ('The Story of the Saffron Pilaf and the Dumpling Soup').

The poem opens conventionally with a doxology, in which God, the Prophet and the *sahābā* receive their share of praise. Already the doxology brings to the fore the significance of food in Boshāq's discourse. Thus, God is praised first and foremost as 'the Creator of Sustenance' (*rezq-āfarin*) and 'the Provider of Daily Nourishment' (*ruzi-rasān*), and the Prophet Muhammad is lauded for his love of *halvā* and honey, as well as for his choice of milk for his community during the *me'rāj*.⁸¹ The doxology is followed by an equally conventional address to a listener or reader – a usual feature of any heroic epic – which stylises the situation of oral performance, signalling to the audience the start of the narrative proper. Whereas the *Shāhnāme* uses such phrases as 'Listen to the story of...' or 'Learn from the tale of...',⁸² Boshāq precedes his story with a culinary echo of Ferdowsi's refrains: 'Now listen to the story of the Saffron Pilaf, / that whets the appetite afresh.'⁸³

Boshāq then starts the narrative proper, keeping to the well-known epic-heroic patterns, but charging them with satirical effect. Moza'far, the King of Dishes, of which rice is a chief ingredient, ascends the throne after having experienced severe trials and ordeals. Born in the muddy water of a paddy field, he spent his childhood as rice in sorrow and anguish, his only associates being swarms of midges and turtles. After reaping by a farmer, the rice is sent on an arduous journey to the storehouse of the rice-seller (*razzāz*), where he is threshed and trodden upon ruthlessly, and has three layers of husk peeled off. The rice prays to God to change his situation; his supplication is answered, and he turns into the noble Moza'far, the King of all Dishes. Moza'far ascends a throne made of *shireh* (fruit syrup) and is crowned with a royal diadem made of *moshkufi* (a confection of almond and sugar). He is immediately surrounded by myrmidons, soups (*āsh*) of all kinds, who assemble around him like 'moths around a candle' and vow allegiance to him: 'All the soups decided in one voice, / to wit: we are slaves and he is the King.'⁸⁴ Boshāq skilfully parodies here the widely diffused epic-heroic pattern of hero initiation when a hero or king rises to power while undergoing hardships and humiliation, as in the legends of Feridun, Key-Khosrow, Eskandar, Dārāb, Sāsān, and others.

As befits a newly crowned ruler, Moza'far first delegates official positions to his courtiers: the post of viziers is given to *ferni* (a kind of rice pudding) and *pāludeh* (a syroped noodle dessert), the two dessert dishes favoured by Boshāq

throughout his Divān; the white rice is granted the influential position of *khalifeh*, Moza‘far’s deputy; the keys of the treasury are entrusted to the *kipā*, which, thanks to its ingredients – sheep’s stomach stuffed with minced meat, rice, onion and lentils, and seasoned with black pepper – surely embodies weightiness, prudence and shrewdness, traits that are essential in a good treasurer. Responsible military positions are also assigned to substantial and solid dishes: he appoints the *changāl* – bread crumbs fried in a mixture of fruit syrup or honey and butter – to the post of *sarhang* (chief commander), while conferring practical military leadership on the bellicose *yakhni* the Turk, ‘who is engaged in combating during [both] supper and breakfast’.⁸⁵

Moza‘far next attends to matters of state, naturally striving for territorial supremacy. He sends a messenger to Khan Boghrā, demanding he pay tribute. Boghrā – himself a dish, a dumpling soup – furiously defies Moza‘far’s authority, bragging recklessly:

I have an ample army of farinaceous foods [*ārdineh*]
 which nowadays are found in the bowls of every one [...]
 When I raise the battle-axe of the skimmer,
 I tear the silk lining under Moza‘far’s chain-mail as if it were a
 sheep’s stomach;
 With the lance of garlic and the mace of carrot
 I will destroy the whole [region] of Korbāl [*ze-zubin-e sir-o ze-gorz-e*
gazar / konam jomleh Korbāl zir-o zabar]⁸⁶

The mention of Korbāl is significant, for it helps to contextualise the emerging strife beyond the limits of witty travesty: Korbāl, famous for its rice, which is the main ingredient of *moza‘far*, is located in the province of Fars.⁸⁷ King Moza‘far therefore seems to represent the Iranian side. In contrast, Boghrā, whose seat is in Khorasan, embodies the Turkish stock; the dish actually derived its name from a Qarakhanid Boghrā Khan, who is credited with its invention and is said to have favoured it.⁸⁸ Thus, Boshāq imitates the main nexus of the heroic part of the *Shāhnāme*: the warfare between Iran and Turan.

And what outlandish warfare it is! Boshāq faithfully adheres to epic depictions of battle preparations and warfare, remaining however in the semantic field of gastronomy. Thus, Moza‘far equips himself with a helmet of sugar-candy (*abluj-e qand*), puts on the chain-mail made of *halvā-ye tar* (halva using rice flour), bears a shield made of crystallised honey (*mashāsh*); he girds his caftan with cotton candy (*pashmak*), and brandishes a club (*gurz*) with a rock candy on top.⁸⁹ The army units that assemble under Moza‘far’s banner from all over Iran are all regional food specialties: home-made flatbreads (*gerdeh-ye khānegi*) rush in multitudes from Yazd to serve as shields in King Moza‘far’s army; masses of caraway soups (*āsh-e zireh*) come from Kerman; rows of fish arrive from Basra and its neighbourhoods; *hariseh* stew arrives

from Shushtar; *āsh-e mīvīz bā nārdān* (a thick stew of raisins mixed with pomegranate seeds) comes from Bavan in Fars – and so on.⁹⁰

The ranks and files arranged, Moza‘far signals the start of battle by casting a sugar candy into a copper vessel⁹¹ – a playful allusion to the custom of throwing a steel ball (*mohreh*) in the *Shāhnāme*.⁹² As befits epic combat, the two heroes engage in a bragging competition, the *rajaz-khwāni*. Moza‘far boasts of being an essential dish on the table at every important event, whether wedding or funeral.⁹³ Boghrā places emphasis on his solidity as an oily, substantial meal:

I colour faces in red, like rose-petals;
 I cause foreheads and cheeks to perspire;
 I glide [smoothly] all through the body, gradually,
 I am not like that rice which gets stuck in the throat [*nah chon ān
 berenj-am keh girad golu*];
 If you are in good health, cook your soup with me;
 only a miserable one seeks [for his dinner] rice with lentils.⁹⁴

The outcome of the battle, however, is not in Boghrā’s favour. After he is beheaded, his gastronomic soldiers beg Moza‘far for mercy, *Shāhnāme*-style:

A clamour rose from the hearts of the farinaceous foods;
 they covered themselves with the shrouds of yoghurt [i.e. white-
 coloured] [*feghān az del-e ārdineh bekhāst/bebastand bar khod
 kafān-hā ze-māst*];
 They prostrated themselves before Moza‘far
 Saying: ‘Oh, you, the celebrated food...
 You are cooked, [while] we are some unbaked balls;
 you are the special (dainty) dish, [while] we are ordinary
 food...’⁹⁵
 If you wish to kill us, well, you have the power and the knife.
 [But] pardon [us], what harm can a handful of flour do after all?
 [*bebakhshā, cheh āyad ze-yek mosht ārd*]⁹⁶

They are pardoned, and a banquet (*bazm*) begins. Among the cheerful lumps of sugar and motley candy, only a piece of almond does not share in the common joyfulness, but solemnly addresses a pistachio in a didactic–fatalistic tone so common to Ferdowsi’s narratorial asides:

Tell Khorasan not to suffer too much on account of Shiraz,
 even though the Rice gained victory over the Dumpling Soup;
 Such is the *halvā* of the world’s tablecloth [*keh in-ast halvā-ye khān-e
 jahān*]:
 every day a new soup tries his fortune.⁹⁷

In the last chapter of the poem, the person of the narrator, until then hidden behind his characters, materialises. Where was he during the culinary warfare? He was there, at the very heart of the battlefield, pillaging and looting, gathering his spoils (*ghanimat*) – a dish from here, a tasty morsel from there – all for the sake of his fellow litterateurs (*ahl-e sokhan*) who would profit from his booty (i.e. his poem) until the Day of Judgement. After all, in Boshāq's paraphrase on Ferdowsi,

Since the food is not lasting forever for anybody
 it's preferable that a soup will remain as [your] memory [*cho ne'mat namānad be-kas pāydar / hamān beh keh āsh-i bovad yādgār*]

In the closing section of his ingenious epic poem, Boshāq openly counterposes his composition with Ferdowsi's epic:

Whereas in the *Shāhnāme* the Zoroastrians [*gabrān*] are praised,
 in my *Divān* I shall praise the cooked stuff;
 Well, there [i.e. in the *Shāhnāme*] the hero is Rostam,
 but is Moza 'far inferior to him in manhood?!
 Be it Rostam, or Bizhan, be it this or that,
 they [all] are running about and roaming in search of bread;
 If, when starving, somebody's eye will fall on a cow,
 he will pawn the *Shāhnāme* for food;
 My story is like a melon
 which is delicious to the palates of the eaters;
 Whether a town-dweller consumes it, whether a villager;
 one says: Bravo, the other exclaims: Super!⁹⁸

Is Boshāq's composition to be construed as a witty and artful demonstration of his poetic abilities? Or as a kind of culinary mockery of the canonical text for entertainment's sake? Or perhaps one should see it as a manifestation of social protest, as argued by the Soviet Tajik scholar Mirzoev? Although there is certainly a measure of bravado on Boshāq's part in his encroaching on the literary canon, his poetic activities can be most aptly understood in connection with the shift in the perception of the literary processes from the end of the eighth/fourteenth century onwards, when the non-elite socioeconomic classes that had previously been excluded from producing literature centred in courts became actively involved in cultural activities, introducing mundane themes, formerly considered inferior, into poetry.⁹⁹

Boshāq Shirāzi's preoccupation with earthly culinary topics in the garb of canonical forms signals the growing dissatisfaction of low-class poets with rigid classical themes.¹⁰⁰ And while the contrast he declares between the *Shāhnāme* and his work ('Whereas in the *Shāhnāme* the Zoroastrians [*gabrān*] are praised, / in my *Divān* I shall praise the cooked stuff') may seem

at first glance to echo criticism of the pre-Islamic contents of Ferdowsi's epic, as was the case with the *Homāyunnāmeḥ* and *Tārikh-e Mohammadi* discussed above, it should in fact be understood as challenging the ossified collection of themes that were deemed appropriate for classical Persian poetry. At the same time, although 'Obeyd Zākāni in his obscene piece and Boshāq in his travesty both mockingly imitate the *Shāhnāmeḥ* – since only a work that is part of an established literary canon can successfully be parodied – the full force of their satire seems to be directed not towards Ferdowsi's work as such, but rather towards the genre of the epic-heroic poem as a whole. The proliferation of epic production of mediocre quality emulating the *Shāhnāmeḥ*, including the historical and religious-historical epics discussed above, could have led to the decline in the status of the genre,¹⁰¹ while the somewhat antiquated heroic values and imagery that these epics propagated must have been perceived as incongruous given the turbulent and fractured reality of the post-Ilkhanid period.¹⁰²

3. *The Biblical Epic Poems of Shāhin*

Despite the extraordinary popularity, even veneration, of the figure of the Judeo-Persian poet Shāhin and his oeuvre among the Jewish communities of Iran and Central Asia until today, his literary works remain largely unexplored by general histories of Iranian literature.¹⁰³ Composed in classical Persian and written down in Hebrew script, with dialectal and colloquial forms and dotted with Hebrew vocabulary, Shāhin's works form an essential component of medieval Judeo-Persian literature. Spanning six centuries, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth, medieval Judeo-Persian literature is represented by a variety of genres: Bible translations, exegetical literature (*tafsir*), halakhic, midrashic and liturgical works, historical chronicles, dictionaries, lyric poetry, transcriptions of classical Persian poetry and, most prominently, religious-epic narrative poems, heralded by Shāhin.

Shāhin's biography remains shrouded in obscurity. Based on the dating of his compositions, we know that he flourished under the last Ilkhanid ruler, Abu Sa'id, and died not later than 1359. His personal name is unknown, Shāhin ('the falcon') most probably being his *takhallos* (pen-name). Although in Judeo-Persian sources he is usually referred to as Mowlānā Shāhin-e Shirāzi, which might point to Shiraz as his birthplace or the location of his literary activities, on the basis of linguistic and other textual evidence it seems that he might have come from Greater Khorasan, possibly from the city of Merv.¹⁰⁴

Shāhin's surviving works include, in chronological order:¹⁰⁵ (1) the *Musānāmeḥ* ('Book of Moses'), compiled in 1327 and dedicated to Abu Sa'id. The poem comprises around 10,000 *beyts*, and presents a versified version of selected parts of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; (2) the *Ardashirnāmeḥ* ('Book of Ardashir') and the *'Ezrānāmeḥ* ('Book of Ezra'), completed in 1333 and comprising around 6,000 and 500 *beyts*, respectively,

which loosely relate the events of the books of Esther and Ezra; (3) the *Bereshitnāmeḥ* ('Book of Genesis'), completed in 1359 and comprising more than 8,700 *beyts*. Thematically, the work may be divided into four parts: (a) from the creation of the world to the binding of Isaac; (b) the binding of Isaac; (c) the book of Job; and (d) the story of Joseph/Yusef and his brothers, and the love of Zoleykhā (Potiphar's wife) for Joseph. Shāhin's epics were not titled by the poet himself; they received their names only later, and are traditionally referred to collectively as *Sefer sharh-e Shāhin 'al ha-Turā* ('The Book of Shāhin's Commentary on the Torah'), or simply *Shāhin-Turā* ('Shāhin's Torah'). Although paraphrasing and relying on the biblical sources, Shāhin makes ample use of midrashic literature, as well as Islamic sources – mostly exegetical genres of *tafsir* and *qesas al-anbeyā'* (stories of prophets). In addition, his biblical epics demonstrate his intimate knowledge of classical Persian poetry, including the *Shāhnāmeḥ*.

Shāhin's indebtedness to the *Shāhnāmeḥ* is not as obvious as it is in the works discussed above. Thus, for example, he refrains from employing the *motaqāreb* metre. He opts for *hazaj* instead, thus shunning the primary formal marker signalling an intertextual link to Ferdowsi's work. In so doing, he seems to be pursuing two objectives: (1) disassociating his verse rendition of Jewish biblical history from the pre-Islamic Iranian subject-matter of the *Shāhnāmeḥ*; I have pointed out the same incentive in the case of *Tārikh-e Mohammadi*, ascribed to Hasan Kāshi, who also employed the *hazaj* metre (see above); (2) more importantly, paying tribute to Nezāmi, whose romantic poems *Khosrow va Shirin* and *Leyli va Majnun*, both couched in the *hazaj* metre, serve as the other source of inspiration for the Jewish poet, alongside the *Shāhnāmeḥ*.

The exact intertextual patterns of Shāhin's deployment of Ferdowsi's epic require extensive investigation far beyond the scope of this chapter. Here, looking at examples from the *Ardashirnāmeḥ*, I touch on how Shāhin engages with well-known Iranian epic material from the *Shāhnāmeḥ* and reinterprets it through the lens of the Hebrew biblical tradition (specifically utilising the Book of Esther, *Megillat Ester*), thus creating an Iranian–Jewish amalgam.

In broad strokes, the *Ardashirnāmeḥ* tells the story of King Bahman Ardashir, whom Shāhin traditionally conflates with King Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther. Crowned Iranian king after Goshtāsp's death, Bahman Ardashir weds the daughter of Bokht Nassar (Nebuchadnezzar), Vashti, whose mischievous behaviour, as well as the amorous adventures of their son Shiru with Mehrzād, a Chinese princess, are related in detail. After getting rid of the vicious Vashti, Ardashir falls in love with the Jewess Esther, who becomes the Queen of Iran and, together with her brother Mordechai, exercises power over Ardashir to prevent Hāmān from destroying the Jewish people. The Ardashir–Esther union produces a son, Korush (Cyrus), who is destined to restore national and religious sovereignty to the Jews by returning them to the Land of

Israel, as narrated in the *‘Ezrānāmeḥ*, which is the direct continuation of the *Ardashirnāmeḥ*.¹⁰⁶

I would like to investigate the initial portion of the *Ardashirnāmeḥ* (some fourteen chapters), where Shāhin’s adoption of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* material appears to be most salient. Shāhin opens his epic with conventional doxological chapters where God, Moses and Aaron (Hārūn) – the latter two being of course substitutes for Muhammad and the *sahābā* – are supplicated, Abu Sa‘id is praised, and the reasons for composing the epic are laid out.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, Shāhin claims as the source of his own versified work the prose version given to him by a certain Yusef from the city of Tiflis (*Yusef be-nām az shahr-e Taflis*).¹⁰⁸ The narrative proper starts with Goshtāsp and his treacherous treatment of Esfandeyār: it includes a precis of Esfandeyār’s campaigns, his loyal service to his father the king, his wrongful enchaining by Goshtāsp, Arjāsp’s attack on Balkh, and Esfandeyār’s avenging of Lohrāsp’s death and the liberation of his sisters.¹⁰⁹ Then follows the description of Goshtāsp sending Esfandeyār to capture Rostam, whence Bahman Ardashir makes his first appearance. The confrontation between Rostam and Esfandeyār and Bahman’s role as go-between are, however, left out, and Esfandeyār’s death at the hands of Rostam is mentioned in only one line.¹¹⁰ Bahman’s training by Rostam is described, as well as his return to Goshtāsp’s court and his warm welcome there.¹¹¹ Goshtāsp, sensing his imminent death, counsels Bahman to rule justly (‘Do not become Zāhhāk, become Feridun’ – *Zāhhāk mashow to show Feridun*) expounding to him his noble Keyanian lineage, from Key-Qobād through Key-Kāvus and Key-Khosrow to Lohrāsp.¹¹² Bahman then ascends the Iranian throne, secretly desiring to avenge the death of his father, Esfandeyār.¹¹³ When informed of Rostam’s demise at the hands of Shaghād, he seizes an opportunity to attack Zābolestān; he captures Zāl, puts him in a cage, and hangs Farāmarz. It is only through the intercession of the wise Pashutan that Bahman releases Rostam’s aged father and spares Zāl’s realm from utter destruction.¹¹⁴ Back in his capital, Shush (Susa), Bahman falls in love with Vashti, and from now on the plot follows the outline of the Book of Esther, peppered, however, with epic scenes of *razm-o bazm* (battles and banquets), and inserting Persian epic figures into the Jewish narrative – for example, Ardashir’s old adviser Pashutan, who is ultimately driven from his position by the iniquitous Hāmān.¹¹⁵

Shāhin’s thematic and stylistic indebtedness to the *Shāhnāmeḥ* in particular, and to the Persian epic tradition in general, is unmistakable.¹¹⁶ The stenographic concision with which Shāhin treats the *Shāhnāmeḥ* episodes in the initial section of his epic indicates a high degree of familiarity with the subject-matter not only on the poet’s part, but on the part of his audience as well, which demonstrates the popularity of Persian epic stories among fourteenth-century Iranian Jewry. Furthermore, the chapters of the *Ardashirnāmeḥ* and the *‘Ezrānāmeḥ* relating the story of Korush continue to bear the stamp of the Iranian epic tradition. Korush, born of an Iranian father and Jewish mother, is

presented as a hero and a king after the traditional *Shāhnāme* model: as a youth, he acquires all the arts and becomes a mighty warrior ‘as strong as Rostam son of Zāl’; his accession speech is infused with the traditional message of justice – he criticises Ardashir, his father, who mistreated Rostam and his family, and throughout the narrative he is engaged in banqueting and hunting, *Shāhnāme*-style.¹¹⁷ In this regard, it seems apposite to draw a parallel with the so-called secondary epics, such as the *Farāmarznāme*, *Bānu-Goshaspnāme*, *Borzunāme*, *Bizhannāme*, and many others: while these elaborate on the deeds of various secondary *Shāhnāme* heroes or introduce the exploits of new ones, mainly Rostam’s offspring, within the frame of the Iranian imperial epic-heroic tradition, Shāhin creates a peculiar offshoot of the same tradition when tying the Bahman Ardashir story in with the national Jewish salvation narrative. By closely intertwining Iranian and Jewish motifs and themes, the *Ardashirnāme* and the *‘Ezrānāme*, perhaps more than any other of Shāhin’s works, reveal the desire of a Jewish poet to link his literary and historical tradition to that of his Iranian homeland.

Shāhin’s particular engagement with the epic genre clearly demonstrates interaction and continuity with the Perso-Islamic literary and cultural milieu, and is best evaluated in the context of the wide production of historical and religious–historical epics in the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century, as discussed in the first part of this chapter. Viewed from an historical perspective, Shāhin’s literary activities seem to be a manifestation of a broad cultural tendency of the time, initiated by late Ilkhanid rulers who adopted the tradition of Perso-Islamic kingship and were actively engaged in acquiring new identities, among other things through patronising new forms of literary and artistic production characterised by the blending of different cultural traditions. Although we do not know whether Shāhin’s works ever reached the Ilkhanid court, his praise of Abu Sa‘id in two of his biblical poems might reflect his awareness of new patterns of patronage that may have provided an impetus for the poet to amalgamate various religious–cultural traditions in his work.

In theoretical terms, Shāhin’s biblical epics evince the process of ‘literary interference’, wherein a more established literary system of classical Persian poetry – specifically represented in our case by the *Shāhnāme* and the subsequent epic tradition – functions as a reservoir of themes, motifs, forms, structures and norms for an emerging Judeo-Persian poetry.¹¹⁸ In turn, within the Judeo-Persian literary system of later periods, the poet’s works were subject to canonisation, becoming a source of borrowing and emulation in their own right.

Conclusion

In the history of classical Persian literature, the towering figure of Hafiz (d. ca. 792/1390) lent the eighth/fourteenth century the definition of the ‘age of the ghazal’, with other forms of poetic production given unsatisfactory attention in scholarly research. However, as I have attempted to demonstrate here, the

period under discussion also witnessed the flourishing of narrative poetry, Persian and Judeo-Persian alike, generated by the *Shāhnāme* legacy. The *Shāhnāme*'s reception ranged from a rather straightforward continuation and/or imitation-cum-contestation of Ferdowsi's epic, to a burlesque response that I conceive of as an attempt both to rejuvenate the canonical model and to challenge the stream of second-hand production of *Shāhnāme* imitations, to its inventive appropriation across national lines. The *Shāhnāme*'s reception during this period is certainly not exhausted by the patterns outlined above. A promising line of inquiry would be to mount a comprehensive examination of contemporary poetic anthologies, collections and miscellanies, with the aim of establishing the 'rating' of the popularity of Ferdowsi's epic by determining how it was represented quantitatively in comparison with other authors and among forms of literary production, and by establishing which of its sections were most often selected, and why. This perspective would promote a more refined understanding of the *Shāhnāme*'s reception within a specific time-frame, while at the same time revealing fresh concepts and new layers of meaning in medieval Persian literature as a whole.

Notes:

1. On a smaller scale, the interpolation of the *Shāhnāme* verses into didactic and historical compositions began prior to the Mongol period, from the second part of the sixth/twelfth to the early seventh/thirteenth centuries. For a helpful survey, see Nasrin Askari, *The Medieval Reception of the Shāh-nāma as a Mirror for Princes*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016, pp. 21-83, and the appendices on pp. 256-388 there. For use of the *Shāhnāme* citations by Joveyni, see *ibid.*, pp. 58-70, 344-8; Ziya' al-Din Sajjādi, 'Shāhnāme dar Tārikh-e jahāngoshā-ye Joveyni', in *Shāhnāme-shenāsi 1: Majmu'eh-ye goftār-hā-ye nokhostin majma'-e 'elmi-ye bahs dar bāreh-ye Shāhnāme* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e bonyad-e Shāhnāme-ye Ferdowsi, 1357/1978), pp. 241-60; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, 'Le livre des rois, miroir du destin. II: Takht-e Soleymān et la symbolique du *Shāh-nāme*', *Studia Iranica* 20 (1991), pp. 54-74; and 'Conscience du passé et résistance culturelle dans l'Iran Mongol', in D. Aigle, ed., *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1997), pp. 136-77. As Melville acutely observes, 'Joveyni uses the *Shahname* ... as a subtext to his narrative of the Mongol conquests, as part of a wider program of asserting Iranian identity in the face of the threat posed by the Mongols, and as a vehicle for Persianizing the regime'. See Charles Melville, 'The Mongol and Timurid Periods, 1250-1500', in Melville, ed., *Persian Historiography* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), pp. 192-3. On the patterns of the *Shāhnāme*'s reception in medieval *dāstāns*, see Julia Rubanovich, 'Tracking the *Shahnama* Tradition in Medieval Persian Folk Prose', in C. Melville and G. van den Berg, eds, *Shahnama Studies II* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 11-34; and 'Aspects of Medieval Intertextuality: Verse Insertions in Persian Prose *dāstāns*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31 (2006), pp. 247-68. Rashid al-Din's deployment of the *Shāhnāme* awaits a proper study, but see for now Askari, *The Medieval Reception of the Shāh-nāma*, pp. 70-4, 349-50; Charles Melville, 'Rashīd al-Dīn and the Shāhnāme', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26: 1/2 (2016), pp. 201-14.
2. For a survey, see Marianna Shreve Simpson, 'Shāh-nāma. iv. Illustrations', *Encyclopædia Iranica*, available online at iranicaonline.org/articles/sah-nama-iv-illustrations (accessed 8 November 2016).
3. Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi Qazvini worked on his redaction for six years, completing it probably before 720/1320, the date when he must have started the composition of his *Zafarnāme* (see below). For an earlier date of completion (714/1314) and the conjecture that Mostowfi's compilation provided the textual basis for a (lost) illustrated copy of the *Shāhnāme* for the Ilkhan Abu Sa'id, see Abu al-'Alā Sudāvar, 'Zafarnāmeḥ va Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Mostowfi', *Irānshenāsi* 8: 4 (1374/1995-96), pp. 753-5. Mostowfi Qazvini's redaction is preserved on the margins of two early manuscripts of the *Zafarnāmeḥ*: British Library MS Or. 2833, dated Ramazān 807/1405 – facsimile edition: Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ be-enzemām-e Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Abu al-Qāsem-e Ferdowsi*, ed. Nasrallāh Purjavādi and Nusratullāh Rastegār, 2 vols (Tehran/Vienne: Markaz-e nashr-e dāneshgāhi-ye Irān, 1377/1999); Istanbul Türk ve İslām Eserleri Müzesi (TIEM) 2042, dated Shavvāl 808/1406. The redaction comprises 60,000 verses, and was prompted by Mostowfi's sincere desire to produce the most exhaustive and accurate copy of Ferdowsi's work, free from scribal errors and 'bad verses'. See Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, vol. 2, p. 7. For additional discussion, see, in the same text, Introduction, pp. 5-6; Muhammad Amin Reyāhi, *Sarcheshmeh-hā-ye Ferdowsi-shenāsi* (Tehran: Mu'assasah-ye motāle'āt va tahqiqāt-e farhangī, 1372/1994), pp. 309-11.

4. For the Bāysonghori redaction, see Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh, 'Bāysonḡorī *Šāhnāma*. i. The manuscript', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 4 (1990), pp. 9–10. For the text of Ferdowsi's fictional *vita* in the Bāysonghori preface, with comments, see Reyāhi, *Sarcheshmeh-hā*, pp. 349–418. Although devoid of any factual value for reconstructing Ferdowsi's biography, this rich narrative account bears valuable testimony to various stages in the fictionalisation and reception of the poet and his work, and thus warrants close scholarly examination. The first steps in this direction are Olga M. Davidson, 'The Testing of the *Shāhnāma* in the "Life of Ferdowsi" Narratives', in L. Marlow, ed., *The Rhetoric of Biography: Narrating Lives in Persianate Societies* (Boston, Mass.: Ilex Foundation, 2011), pp. 11–20; and 'Interweavings of Book and Performance in the Making of the *Shāhnāma* of Ferdowsi: Extrapolations from the Narrative of the So-Called Bāysonghori Preface', in O. M. Davidson and M. Shreve Simpson, eds, *Ferdowsi's Shāhnāma: Millennial Perspectives* (Boston, Mass.: Ilex Foundation, 2013), pp. 1–11.
5. The table is not intended to be exhaustive, but represents certain tendencies in the reception of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* during the period under discussion. Thus, for example, I did not have access to such manuscripts as *Anbeyānāmeḥ*, a versified history of pre-Islamic prophets and Muhammad, written probably during Ghazan Khan's reign (694–703/1295–1304) – see C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, transl. into Russian, and revised with additions and corrections, by Y. Bregel' (Moscow: Nauka, 1972), vol. 1, p. 529; for the general history of Iran in the *masnavi* form composed by an unknown author in 655/1257 under the Salghurids, see Storey, *Persian Literature*, vol. 3, p. 1,455; or Seyfi Haravi's *Sāmnāmeḥ* (see note 13, below). I choose not to enter into the historical poems by Amir Khosrow and the narrative epic poems of the early Timurid period, whose approaches to Ferdowsi's epic deserve a separate in-depth study.
6. In this chapter I am not concerned with the historical value of the epics under discussion. On the historical importance of the *Zafarnāmeḥ*, see, for example, Charles Melville, 'Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī's *Zafarnāmah* and the Historiography of the Late Ilkhanid Period', in K. Eslami, ed., *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar* (Princeton, NJ: Zagros, 1998), pp. 4–10. On the *Shāhanshāhnāmeḥ-ye Tabrizi*, see 'Abbāsi and 'Alī-ābād, 'Enāyat be-*Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Ferdowsi*', pp. 37–40; John A. Boyle, 'Some Thoughts on the Sources for the Il-khanid Period of Persian History', *Iran* 12 (1974), pp. 185–8. On the appraisal of *Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Chengizi*, see Melville, 'Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn', pp. 58–65. The bibliography is not exhaustive.
7. To my knowledge, this curious discrepancy has not been treated as yet, and deserves a comprehensive study of its own.
8. For a contrary view, see Melville, 'Mongol and Timurid Periods', p. 192.
9. The poem was edited in two parts. See Hakim Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Tārikh-e manzum. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, ed. 'Alī Pir-neyā, 2 vols (Tehran: Farhangestān-e zabān va adab-e fārsi, 1383/2004); Hakim Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Tārikh-e manzum. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, ed. 'Alī Pir-neyā (Tehran: Mirās-e maktub, 1390/2012). The poem spans the lifetime of the Prophet and the first caliphs, chronicles the reigns of the Umayyads and the Abbasids, touches upon Iran's past from mythological rulers to the Khwārazmshāhs and ends with a detailed account of the Mongol conquests and their rule up to Zajjāji's time.
10. For an attempt to reconstruct Zajjāji's biography based on data extracted from his poem, see 'Alī Pir-neyā, 'Asar-i now-yāfteḥ az Hakim Zajjāji', *Nāmeḥ-ye Farhangestān* 7 (1375/1996), pp. 68–71. The disparity in the date of Zajjāji's death originates in a different identification of one of his dedicatees (see note 11, below).

11. In identifying one of Zajjāji's *mamduhs* with Malek Sadr al-Din (d. 668/1269–70), a governor of Tabriz after the Mongol conquest of 628/1231 and a key figure in the financial administration of north-western Iran under the early Ilkhans, I follow J. Rāshki 'Ali-ābād and J. 'Abbāsi, who convincingly refute earlier suggestions, including that of 'Ali Pir-neyā, who points to the Ilkhanid vizier Sadr al-Din Ahmad Khāledī Zanjāni (d. 697/1297) as Zajjāji's dedicatee. See Javād Rāshki 'Ali-ābād and Javād 'Abbāsi, 'Homāyunnāmeḥ (tārikh-e manzum-e Zajjāji) (barrasi-ye noskheh-shenākhti va tārikhi-ye asar va mohtavā-ye ān', *Jostār-hā-ye adabi* 187 (1393/2014–15), pp. 46–8. For the latter identification, see Pir-neyā, 'Asar-i now-yāfteh', pp. 73–5; 'Abd al-Heyy Habibi, 'Tārikh-e manzum-e Zajjāji,' *Yaghmā* 57 (1331/1953), pp. 557–8. The most recent and comprehensive study of Malek Sadr al-Din is Daniel Zakrzewski, 'Malik Šadr al-Dīn Tabrīzī and the Establishment of Mongol Rule in Iran', *Asiatische Studien* 71: 4 (2017), pp. 1059–73.
12. Although the author, Sadr al-Din Khatib Rabi'i Pushangi, is mentioned as a talented poet in some later sources, among them Jājarī's poetic anthology, his *Kartnāmeḥ* seems to have fallen into oblivion as early as the end of the eighth/fourteenth century. This might be attributable to the fact that the work was probably never completed, and the poet fell from his patron's grace and died in prison. On the vicissitudes of his life, see Seyf b. Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Haravi, *Tārikhnāmeḥ-ye Herāt*, ed. Gholām-Rezā Tabātabāyi Majd (Tehran: Asātir, 1383/2004), pp. 471–7. For a detailed discussion with a critical reference to the existing research on Rabi'i Pushangi, see Khalil-Allāh Afzali, 'Kartnāmeḥ, sākh-tār-o qāleb (barrasi-ye abyāt-e bāzmāndeh-ye Kartnāmeḥ dar Tārikhnāmeḥ-ye Herāt', *Jostār-hā-ye adabi* 178 (1391/2012), pp. 137–8. The poem is believed to have comprised around 6,000 verses (Afzali, 'Kartnāmeḥ', p. 137), and to have encompassed the story of Herat's foundation, its naming and its merits (*fazā'el*), as well as the beginnings and establishment of the Kart dynasty between 643/1245 and 699/1299, with particular emphasis on the exploits of its third ruler, Malek Fakhr al-Din (see Afzali, 'Kartnāmeḥ', pp. 139, 146–7). On the Karts more generally, who ruled from 643/1245 to 791/1389, see Bertold Spuler, 'Āl-e Kart', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 1 (1985), pp. 758–60.
13. Seyf al-Haravi, *Tārikhnāmeḥ-ye Herāt*. The verse count is based on my perusal of Seyf al-Haravi's *History*. It should also be taken into account that there are some fifty 'stray' verses in the *motaqāreb* metre in the text, which are left by the editor without attribution and may well have been part of the *Kartnāmeḥ* – see, for example, Seyf al-Haravi, *Tārikhnāmeḥ-ye Herāt*, pp. 542–3, 670. Alternatively, they might derive from the extinct historical epic *Sāmnāmeḥ*, composed by Seyf al-Haravi, describing the heroic feats of Jamāl al-Din Sām Muhammad, Malek Fakhr al-Din's commander-in-chief – see Zabih-Allāh Safā, *Hamāseh-sarāyi dar Irān* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1333/1954–55), p. 359. On account of our scant knowledge of this work, I have not included it in the considerations presented in this chapter.
14. Also known in the sources as *Tārikh-e Ghazāni* or *Tārikh-e Ghāzān-khān*. See Javād 'Abbāsi and Javād Rāshki 'Ali-ābād, 'Enāyat be-Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Ferdowsi va shāhnāmeḥ-sarāyi dar 'asr-e farmān-ravāyi-ye moghulān bar Irān (barrasi-ye mowredi: do Shāhnāmeḥ-ye khatti dar tārikh-e moghul)', *Jostār-hā-ye adabi* 169 (1389/2010), pp. 23–4. The work has not yet been edited. For its manuscripts, of which three are currently known, see Charles Melville, 'Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn: Persian Verse Chronicles in the Mongol Period', *Studia Islamica* 104/105 (2007), pp. 48–50, 51; 'Abbāsi and 'Ali-ābād, 'Enāyat be-Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Ferdowsi', pp. 24–5. For a probable dating of the poem's completion, see

- Melville, 'Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn', p. 53; and 'Mongol and Timurid Periods', p. 193. Compare Storey/Bregel, *Persian Literature*, vol. 2, p. 767. *Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Chengīzī* comprises an account of Mongol and Ilkhan history punctuated with homiletic passages and based on Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāme' al-tavārikh*; for a brief survey of the poem's contents, see Menuchehr Mortazavi, 'Moqalledin-e Shāhnāmeḥ dar dowreh-ye moghul va timuri va tārikh-e manzum-e Shams al-Dīn-e Kāshāni,' *Dāneshkadeh-ye adabeyyāt va 'olum-e ensāni-ye Tabriz* 62 (1341/1962), pp. 332–52; Melville, 'Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn,' pp. 57–61.
15. For a scholarly edition, see Hasan Kāshi, *Tārikh-e Mohammadi yā Tārikh-e davāzdah emām – Tārikh-e rashidi – Tārikh al-owlād al-hazreh-ye al-mostafavi – A'emmeḥnāmeḥ beh zamimeh-ye Ma'refatnāmeḥ va haftband*, ed. Rasul Ja'fariyān (Qom: Ketābkhāne-ye takhassosi-ye tārikh-e eslām va Irān, 1377/1998–99). The title variations appear in the text itself (pp. 27–8). See also Storey/Bregel', *Persian Literature*, vol. 3, p. 1,430; vol. 1, p. 621. The work comprises the detailed history of the Prophet and the twelve imams, each presented according to a fixed thematic pattern.
 16. Hasan Kāshi was a famous Shi'i poet (d. no earlier than 738/1337), who specialised in *manqabat-guyi* – composing religious poetry in praise of *ahl-e beyt* and the Shi'i imams. Although the editor does not express any doubts regarding the authorship of the work – this notwithstanding the fact that the author's name is nowhere mentioned in the text – these are emphatically expressed by Hasan 'Ātefi in his introduction to Hasan Kāshi's *Divān*. Among the indications refuting Hasan Kāshi's composition of the *Tārikh-e Mohammadi*, the strongest are that he is not credited with the work in old sources, that there are considerable stylistic discrepancies between the epic and the *Divān*, and that the general anti-establishment stance in his *Divān* is scarcely compatible with the flowery praise of Öljeitü and Rashīd al-Dīn found in the *Tārikh* – see Seyyed 'Abbās Rastākhiz, ed., *Divān-e Hasan-e Kāshi*, introduction by Hasan 'Ātefi (Tehran: Ketābkhāne-ye muzeh va markaz-e asnād-e majles-e showrā-ye eslāmi, 1388/2010), pp. 41–9. The authorship of *Tārikh-e Mohammadi* thus remains an open question. For want of a better option, however, I stick to Hasan Kāshi as the work's author.
 17. See Hasan Kāshi, *Tārikh-e Mohammadi*, pp. 50–6, 46–50, respectively. In view of the profuse praise of Muhammad-e Khodābandeh Öljeitü, it is not unlikely that we are dealing here with a 'dedicatory' title, where the name of the work's dedicatee is hinted at; compare Juyā Jahānbakhsh, 'Barg-i az tārikh-e adab-e shi'i', *Āyineh-ye pazhuḥesh* 53 (1377/1998), p. 53, n. 14. Compare also the description of Hasan Kāshi by Bregel' as Öljeitü's court poet, in Storey/Bregel', *Persian Literature*, vol. 3, p. 1,430.
 18. Facsimile edition: Sāheb, *Daftar-e delkoshā*, ed. Rasul Hādi-zādeh (Moscow: Nauka, 1965). The narrative covers the history of the Shabānkāreh dynasty of the Fars region from its early origins in the fifth/eleventh century to the reign of Shāh Mozaffar al-Dīn Muhammad (d. 658/1260).
 19. Otherwise unknown, Sāheb was probably not a professional court poet; judging from the meta-narrative remarks scattered throughout his poem, he seems to have spent most of his life in Fars serving as *dabir*, and for a period even as *sāheb-divān*, under the Shabānkārehs. His embittered comments about contemporaneous rulers might stem from his lack of recognition on their part. See Sāheb, *Daftar-e delkoshā*, pp. 11–13; Nāser Takmil-Homāyun, 'Āshnāyi bā Shubānkāregān: Mo'arrefi va tahlil-e Daftar-e delgoshā 3', *Honar va mardom* 191–2 (1357/1978), pp. 79–80.

20. According to the thematic division of Mostowfi himself, he composed his work in three books (*ketāb*): the first one, entitled *eslāmi*, was devoted to the history of the Arabs from the times of the Prophet to the 'Abbasids; the second part covered the history of Iranian Islamic dynasties from the Saffarids to the Khvārezmshāhs (*sharh-e hāl-e 'ajam*), and was entitled *ahkāmi*, since 'those nations succumbed to the rule of the religion' (*chu bar hokm-e dīn ān duval shod tamām*); while the third part entitled *soltāni*, is a detailed account of Mongol and Ilkhanid rule down to the author's own time. For Mostowfi's explanations, see Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, f. 9; Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ. Qesm al-eslāmiyeh*, ed. Mahdi Madāyeni and Parvin Bāqeri Ahranjāni (Tehran: Pazhuheshgāh-e 'olum-e ensāni va motāle'āt-e farhangi, 1380/2001), vol. 1, pp. 21–2, ll. 428–33. For a facsimile edition of the whole work, see Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*. Its various parts have been edited separately by a team of Iranian scholars under the supervision of Mahdi Madāyeni.
21. On the author and his other works, see Charles Melville, 'Hamd-Allāh Mostawfi', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 11 (2003), pp. 631–4.
22. Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, vol. 2, f. 1, 165.
23. Known in a unique copy preserved in the British Library, Or 2780 (ff. 41v–132v), dated 14th Rajab 800/23 March, 1398, it is part of a larger manuscript collection of epics. An alternative title – *Chengiznāmeḥ*, which appears in the *fehrest* to the manuscript – is erroneous; see 'Abbāsi and 'Alī-ābād, 'Enāyat be-Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Ferdowsi', p. 33. The author explicitly refers to his work as *Shahanshāhnāmeḥ* in the text (Or 2780 f. 42v). The work starts with Japheth, then relates the genealogy of the Mongols from Noah's son Japheth up to Chinggis Khan, and ends with Hülegü and his successors. On Ahmad-e Tabrizi, see Ī. Aka, 'Ahmad Tabrizi', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 1 (1985), p. 661.
24. For the assertion of Abu Sa'id's having commissioned the poem and serving as its dedicatee, see Or 2780, f. 132v.; f. 42v. The convoluted patronship arises from the fact that, in the course of the eight years that Ahmad-e Tabrizi worked on his poem, Abu Sa'id died, and the poet seems to have completed his work under the Jalayerids, whose contemporaneous ruler Shaykh Hasan[-e Bozorg] (757/1356) and vizier Mas'ud Shāh he praises. See Or 2780, f. 132v.; compare Melville, 'Mongol and Timurid Periods', p. 195.
25. For scholarly editions, see Isami, *The Futuh-us-salatin or the Shahnama of Medieval India*, ed. A. Mahdi Husain (Agra: Educational Press, 1938); Isami, *Futuh-us-salatin*, ed. A. S. Usha (Madras: University of Madras, 1948). The poem embraces 350 years of Muslim history in India – from the Ghaznavids through the Ghurids and the sultans of Delhi to the founding of the Bahmanid dynasty. Not mentioned in any extant *tazkereḥ*, 'Esāmi's biography can be only partially reconstructed on the basis of the meta-narrative comments in his poem. See Isami, *Futuh-us-salatin*, editor's preface, pp. 1–5; Peter Jackson, 'Esāmi, 'Abd al-Malek', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 8 (1998), p. 563; Abu al-Qāsem Rādfar, 'Barrasi-ye jombēh-hā-ye adabi-ye Fotuh al-salātin-e 'Esāmi, Ferdowsi-ye Dakan', *Adabeyyāt-e 'erfāni va ostureh-shenākhti* 2 (1385/2006), pp. 60–1.
26. For an edition based on a single manuscript, see Nuri Azhdari, *Ghāzānnāmeḥ-ye manzum*, ed. Mahmud Modabberi (Tehran: Bonyād-e mowqūfāt-e doktor Mahmud-e Afshār, 1380/2001–2). The poem gives a brief account of major Mongol rulers before Ghazan, followed by a detailed and elaborate narrative of the latter's reign in a semi-legendary vein. See Charles Melville, 'Ghāzān-nāma', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 10 (2001), p. 383; and 'History and Myth: The Persianisation of Ghazan Khan', in Ē. Jeremiás and I. Vásáry, eds, *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th–17th*

- Century* (Piliscsaba: The Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2003), pp. 133–60.
27. Some biographical details on this otherwise unknown poet can be garnered from his poem, as well as from a prose preface to the manuscript, compiled in all probability by the scribe. According to the preface, Khvājah Nur al-Din's father, Khvājah Shams al-Din Mahmud al-Azhdari, served as vizier during Ghazan's reign (his name, however, is not found in extant contemporary sources). During Oveys's reign, Nur al-Din, then a fourteen-year-old student of medicine, astrology and maths, was summoned from Tabriz to the Jalayerid court, stationed in Barda'eh to cure the seriously ailing Sultan Oveys. The boy succeeded where experienced medical practitioners had failed, curing the sultan in fourteen days. As remuneration, he asked for a hereditary pension (*adrār-e mowrusi*), which request was granted. The grateful Nur al-Din decides to aggrandise the name of the sultan in a versified work patterned on the *Shāhnāme* (Azhdari, *Ghāzānnāme*, p. 13). Neither of the above details can be traced in the poem itself. Although none too credible, the story is repeated without comment in Storey/Bregel', *Persian Literature*, vol. 2, p. 775, and Patrick Wing, *The Jalayirids: Dynastic State Formation in the Mongol Middle East* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 131. According to the poet's statement, he started composing the epic in 758/1357, when fifty years old, and completed it five years later, in 763/1362. See Azhdari, *Ghāzānnāme*, p. 25, v. 278 and p. 379, v. 8,692, respectively. According to the poet's statement in another place, however, he laboured on its composition for one year (Azhdari, *Ghāzānnāme*, p. 378, v. 8,683). This was either a rhetorical exaggeration, an exigency of the metre, or an indication of overall time spent in writing.
 28. An unnamed vizier is praised at the very end of the poem. See Azhdari, *Ghāzānnāme*, p. 379, ll. 8,694–8,709. There has been a cautious attempt to identify him with Amir Najib al-Din, who was appointed vizier in 762/1361. See Mahdi Farahāni-Monfared, 'Ghāzānnāme, Shāhnāme-yi az 'asr-e moghul', *Ketāb-e māk: tārikh va joghrāfeyā* 81, 82, 83 (1383/2004), pp. 21–2.
 29. See Sajjād Āyadenlu, 'Homāyunnāme-ye Zajjāji va Shāhnāme', *Matn-shenāsi-ye adab-e fārsi* 15: 6/4 (1393/2014–15), pp. 17–22.
 30. Or 2780, f. 42r.
 31. Or 2780, f. 132r.
 32. Ibid.
 33. For a partial list of Persian archaic words in the *Ghāzānnāme*, see Mahmud Modabberi, 'Favāyed-e laghvi-ye Ghāzānnāme-ye manzum', *Nāme-ye Farhangestān* 22 (1382/2003–04), pp. 40–60.
 34. For examination of these points in the *Homāyunnāme*, see Āyadenlu, 'Homāyunnāme-ye Zajjāji', pp. 3–4 (on deployment of Ferdowsi's verses as *tazmin*), pp. 9–10 (on explicit references to the heroes and tales), pp. 15–17 (on common motifs), pp. 22–32 (on verse interpolation or stylisation). For the *Ghāzānnāme*, see Sajjād Āyadenlu, 'Az qāfeleh-ye moqalledān-e Shāhnāme', *Ketāb-e māk* 70 (1382/2003), pp. 125–30. For the *Shāhnāme-ye Chengizi*, see 'Abbāsi and 'Ali-ābād, 'Enāyat be-Shāhnāme-ye Ferdowsi', pp. 27–9. For the *Daftar-e delgoshā*, see Sāheb, *Daftar-e delkoshā*, pp. 13–14.
 35. See above, n. 3.
 36. Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāme*, ff. 7–8; Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāme: Qesm al-eslāmiyeh*, vol. 1, pp. 17–18, ll. 323–47. Composing a work at the request of a friend or friends is a common topos, and should not necessarily be taken as an autobiographical detail.

37. *ze-Ferdowsi ar chand kardam gozar / nekuhesh nayābam ze-dānā magar // keh chon kār-e seyed be-nazm āvaram / be-har do sarā z-ān sokhan bar-kh^varam* (Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāme*, f. 8; Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāme. Qesm al-eslāmiyeh*, vol. 1, p. 22, ll. 452–3).
38. *keh har gez kas ān-rā naguyad javāb* (Sāheb, *Daftar-e delkoshā*, f. 2b; see also f. 3a).
39. *foru shost bāyad del az kin-e man / sokhan goft bāyad be-āyin-e man // [...]* pas az Yazdegerd-at beguyam neshān (ibid., f. 2b).
40. Sāheb, *Daftar-e delkoshā*, ff. 130a–131a; compare ibid., ff. 12–13; Nāser Takmil-Homāyun, ‘Āshnāyi bā Shubānkāregān: Mo‘arrefi va tahlil-e Daftar-e delgoshā 4’, *Honar va mardom* 193 (1358/1979), pp. 79–80.
41. See Isami, *Futuhus-salatin*, pp. 10–11, 60, 613–14. Curiously, ‘Esāmi presents a rather peculiar version of the Ferdowsi–Mahmud legend, according to which Mahmud commissioned the *Shāhnāme*, supporting Ferdowsi in every possible way, but when the latter requested to be granted the region of Rey in remuneration for the poem, Mahmud refused, instead bestowing on the poet the measure of gold which an elephant can carry. Hurt, Ferdowsi used the gift to buy sour beer (*foqā‘i torosh* az ‘atā-yash kharid).
42. Isami, *Futuhus-salatin*, p. 609.
43. *bas-i beyt-e Shāhnāme-yo Khamseh-ham / be-tazmin dar-in nāme kardam raqam // be-d-ān tā be-ta‘sir-e eqbāl-eshān / be-giti qabul oftad in dāstān* (ibid., p. 609).
44. *do shā‘er dar-in fann cho kārāgahān / robudand guy-e kamāl az jahān* (‘in this art two expert poets / seized the ball of perfection from the world; ibid.).
45. Ibid., pp. 17–20. For ‘Esāmi’s predilection for Nezāmi, see also ibid., p. 615.
46. Ferdowsi is referred to as *bi-nazir* (‘unrivalled’ – see Zaijāji, *Homāyunnāme*. *Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, p. 966, v. 249); *sehr-sanj* (‘magic-measurer’ – see Zaijāji, *Homāyunnāme*. *Nimeh-ye nokhost*, vol. 1, p. 350, v. 28); *honar-parvar* (‘skilful’ – ibid., p. 228, v. 77), and so on.
47. *ze-Dastān borow dast kutāh kon / sovi mardī-ye Mortazā rāh kon // bogu mardī-ye sāheb-e zu al-feqār / bar-āvar zeh badkh‘āh-e Heydar damār // ze-‘Othmān sokhan gu ze-Rostam maguy / be-chowgān ze-khorshid berbāy guy // az ān nāmdārān-e dīn juy kām / ze-jang-e ‘Omar gu nah az jang-e Sām [...] // ze-Seddiq kon sarvari āshkār / ze-Rostam cheh guyi-yo Esfandeyār [...] // ze-Ārash naguyi-yo tir-o kamān / koni yād-e in Sa‘d-e niku-gomān [...] // ze-Khāled sokhan kon javān-e khatir / cheh guyi hadis-e Narimān-e pir // v-ar az mardī-ye Hamzeh rāni sokhan / ze-Dastān naguyi-yo az Tahamtan // nayāri ze-Bahrām-o Rohhām yād / bovad mardī-ye har dō pish-e to bād // ze-mardī-ye Talheh sokhan gush dār / bekh‘ān ān cheh kard u be-har kārzār [...] // magu bish az Rostam-o Zāl-o Sām / mapaz bishtar z-in havas-hā-ye khām; Zaijāji, *Homāyunnāme*. *Nimeh-ye nokhost*, vol. 1, pp. 208–9, ll. 2–5, 7, 10, 13–16, 20.*
48. Ibid., p. 209, ll. 21–2. See also ibid., vol. 2, p. 691, ll. 9–18.
49. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 210, ll. 33–56; compare ibid., vol. 1, p. 291, ll. 3–5. How can one even conceive, wonders Zaijāji, that a heavy-armoured warrior might be able to fight in the depths of the sea (alluding to the story of Rostam and Akvān Div); that a bird (Simorgh) nourishes a human baby with its milk and cures the wounds of Rostam and Rakhsh; that such a hero as Rostam travels from Zabol to Mazandaran all alone, without a single retainer who would keep his goblet, and so on. It is worth mentioning that all the episodes that arouse Zaijāji’s disapproval, come from the heroic part of the poem.
50. For a scholarly edition, see Rabī‘, ‘*Alināme*’, ed. Rezā Bayāt and Abu al-Fazl Gholāmi (Tehran: Mirās-e maktub, 1389/2010). For a useful discussion of the epic

and its peculiarities, see Muhammad Rezā Shafī'i Kadkani, 'Hamāseh-ye shī'i az qarn-e panjom', *Zamimeh-ye Āyineh-ye mirās* 20 (1389/2010), pp. 93–176.

51. Compare: *to az Rostam-o Tus chandin maguy / dar in kuy-e bihodeh-guyān mapuy* ('Do not tell that much about Rostam and Tus; / do not trot this alley of idle talkers' – Rabī', *Alināmeḥ*, p. 135, v. 2,978); see also p. 5, ll. 94–7; p. 303, ll. 4,758–60. *Alināmeḥ*'s polemical attitude is imbued with Shi'i sentiments in the *manāqeb-kh'āni* vein. On Rabī' possibly being a *manāqeb-kh'ān*, see Mehrān Afshāri, 'Jostojū-yi dar tārikh-e manāqeb-kh'āni va eshāreh-hā-yi be manzumeh-ye 'Alināmeḥ', *Zamimeh-ye Āyineh-ye mirās* 20 (1389/2010–11), pp. 25–9. Rabī's polemical attitude towards the *Shāhnāmeḥ* seems to be anchored in his conviction that it was composed with a malignant purpose on the part of anti-Shi'i 'Karrāmiyān' (the Karrāmiya) to distract the Muslim public from the historical feats of 'Alī with captivating lies about 'the kings of the past' (*shāhān-e pishin*). See Rabī', *Alināmeḥ*, pp. 135–6, ll. 2,980–9). For discussion of the passage, see Shafī'i Kadkani, 'Hamāseh-ye shī'i', pp. 101–2.
52. Thus, for example, in the *Shāhnāmeḥ* the span of Keyumars's reign is thirty years, in the *Homāyunnāmeḥ* forty years and one month; Jamshid rules = 700 years versus 716; Key-Qobād – 100 versus 126; Key-Kāvus – 120 versus 150; Key-Khosrow – sixty versus eighty; Bahman – sixty versus 112; Ardashir – forty-two versus sixteen, and so on. The chronology closely corresponds to the one found in Hamzeh Esfahāni's *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'* (completed 350/961). See Hamzeh b. al-Hasan al-Esfahāni, *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'*, ed. J. M. E. Gottwaldt (St Petersburg/Leipzig: n.p., 1844–48), vol. 1, pp. 10–22. On one occasion, Zajjāji mentions Hamzeh Esfahāni as his source for the history of Iranian kings. See Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, p. 980, v. 7. See also below, notes 53ff.
53. Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, pp. 989–95; compare Hamzeh al-Esfahāni, *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'*, pp. 42–3; Anonymous, *Mojmal al-tavārikh va al-qesas*, ed. Malek al-Sho'arā Bahār (Tehran: Donyā-ye ketāb, 1381/2002–03), pp. 58–60.
54. Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, pp. 968–70. On Tahmuras's building of Bābol, Madāyen and the Old Fortress (*Kohandezh*) of Merv, all mentioned by Zajjāji, see, for example, Hamzeh al-Esfahāni, *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'*, pp. 29–30; Anonymous, *Mojmal al-tavārikh va al-qesas*, p. 39. On the beginning of idolatry, fasting, and so on, see Hamzeh al-Esfahāni, *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'*, pp. 30–1; compare Anonymous, *Mojmal al-tavārikh va al-qesas*, p. 189.
55. Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, p. 971, ll. 7–23. See also Hamzeh al-Esfahāni, *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'*, p. 31; compare Anonymous, *Mojmal al-tavārikh va al-qesas*, p. 40.
56. Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, pp. 986–7, ll. 3–10. On Dārāb establishing *barid* (though using horses, not pigeons), see Hamzeh al-Esfahāni, *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'*, p. 39; al-Tha'ālebi, *Ghorar akhbār moluk al-Fors va seyyarehem*, ed. and transl. H. Zotenberg (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900), p. 398. For some more examples of thematic discrepancy, see Āyadenlu, 'Homāyunnāmeḥ-ye Zajjāji', pp. 11–17.
57. Thus, for example, the reign of Menuchehr is connected to the appearance of Moses and to the Jews entering the Land of Israel. See Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, p. 978, ll. 30–6; compare Hamzeh al-Esfahāni, *Ta'rikh seni moluk al-'arz va al-anbeyā'*, pp. 33–4.
58. Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye dovvom*, vol. 2, pp. 973–4, ll. 26–34. Zajjāji (p. 974, v. 36) further expresses his scepticism as to the common knowledge that

Zahhāk's ailment was cured by nourishing the snakes with human brain: 'I did not believe these things at all [*ma-rā in sokhan hich bāvar nakard*]'. A similar rationalisation is given, albeit as an alternative tradition to Ferdowsi's, by al-Tha'ālebi, *Ghorar akhbār moluk al-Fors*, p. 20.

59. See, for example, the *Ghāzānnāmeḥ*, whose author declares that he negated the *Shāhnāmeḥ* (*ze-Shāhnāmeḥ tabarrā kardam nokhost*) in order to replace it with exaltation of Ghazan, his Muslim patron. See Azhdari, *Ghāzānnāmeḥ-ye manzum*, p. 26, ll. 292–6.
60. Hasan Kāshī, *Tārikh-e Mohammadi*, p. 54, ll. 307–16.
61. *ey pesar qesseh-ye majāz makhān / al-hazar al-hazar bar khāndan-e ān // [...]*
chand guyi hadis-e Rostam-e Zāl / la'b-o bihudeh dorugh-e mohāl // zekr-e
gabrān-o ahl-e ostudān / chand khāni bar mosalmānān (ibid., pp. 159–60).
62. Ibid., p. 159.
63. Ibid., p. 54, v. 317.
64. I am aware of only one additional example of a religious–historical epic written in a metre different from that of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* – namely, the *Ketib-e mo'jezāt*, also known as *Shāhnāmeḥ-ye Heyrati*, composed by Heyrati-ye Tuni in 953/1546 in the *hazaj musaddas* metre. On this Shi'i epic, see Muhammad Ja'far Yāhaqqi, 'Heyrati-ye Tuni, shā'er-e ahl-e beyt', *Meshkāt* 21 (1367/1988–89), esp. pp. 112–16.
65. Vast and detailed scholarship has been generated around various aspects of the development and nature of historical writing in prose under the Mongols. For the most up-to-date survey, see Melville, 'Mongol and Timurid Periods', pp. 155–92, 198–208.
66. Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ. Qesm al-eslāmiyeh*, vol. 1, p. 16, ll. 290–1. Mostowfi Qazvini gives a detailed explanation of the superiority of poetry over prose, taking the use of sophisticated rhetorical devices as one of the criteria (see ibid., p. 16, ll. 280–9). For a short discussion of Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi's views on writing history in prose as opposed to verse, see Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, Introduction, pp. 8–10.
67. See also below, n. 101.
68. See Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ. Qesm al-eslāmiyeh*, vol. 1, p. 15, ll. 274–5: 'When the written word is imparted vividness because of its versification / people's desire to read it will increase. // Know that it is less tedious than prose, / especially in the eyes of the wise ones' (*farāvān shavad meyl-e mardom be-d-u / gar az nazm yābad sokhan rang-o bu // malālat dar u kamtar az nasr dān / be-vizheh be-nazdiki-ye bekhradān*). Compare Hasan-e Kāshī, who elaborates on his choice of verse for his *Ma'refatnāmeḥ*, which may also apply to his *Tārikh-e Mohammadi*: 'I chose [composing] in verse / when I inspected [the tastes] of the people: // What do they know and prefer? / What kind of reading does their soul desire? // They always seek Persian poetry, / both notables and simple people. // Since verse is so preferable, / let them read it' (*nazm-rā ekhteyār az ān kardam / keh nazar dar jahāneyān kardam // tā cheh dānand-o dust-tar dārand / kh'ānad-ash-rā be-jān talabkār-and // tāleb-e she'r-e pārsi-st modām / āncheh khavvās[sic]-ast-o āncheh hast 'avāmm*) // *tā chonin-ast nazm-ash owlā-tar / tā bekh'ānand dar meyāneh magari*). Hasan Kāshī, *Tārikh-e Mohammadi*, p. 160.
69. Cited according to Mortazavi, 'Moqalledin-e Shāhnāmeḥ', pp. 333–4. See also Melville, 'Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn', pp. 54–5.
70. Mortazavi, 'Moqalledin-e Shāhnāmeḥ', pp. 335–6.
71. For discussion, see Melville, 'Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn', pp. 53, 56.
72. As Charles Melville aptly puts it in his treatment of Mostowfi's and Kāshāni's epics, 'We notice a tension between the belief that poetry is superior to prose, and

- paradoxically the need for the poet to be “translating” an authoritative prose text (without which, the epics and sagas are just “night-time tales” as al-Bīrūnī sarcastically called them).’ Melville, ‘Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn’, pp. 55–6.
73. See, respectively, Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, vol. 2, ff. 924, 1,414–15, where he explicitly mentions the *Jāme‘ al-tavārikh*, and describes its versification with the help of the common ‘book as a bride’ metaphor (compare Melville, ‘Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn’, p. 55); and Azhdari, *Ghāzānnāmeḥ*, p. 25, ll. 272–3 (compare Melville, ‘Mongol and Timurid Periods’, p. 196). On the degree of Mostowfi’s dependence on the *Jāme‘ al-tavārikh*, see Muhammad Bāqer Vosuqi, ‘Āyā bakhsh-e tārikh-e moghul dar Zafarnāmeḥ-ye Hamdollāh-e Mostowfi noskkeh-badal-e Jāme‘ al-tavārikh-ast?’ *Pazhuhesh-hā-ye ‘olum-e tārikhi* 4: 1 (1391/2012), pp. 214–25, where the narrative of the Mongols’ conquest of China in the two works is discussed as a case study. For the sources of the Islamic part, among which is a range of histories from al-Tabari to al-Esfahāni and Ebn al-Athir, see Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, vol. 1, f. 10; Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ. Qesm al-eslāmiyeh*, vol. 1, p. 1, v. 13. For discussion of these and other possible sources, see the latter text, Introduction, pp. 44–58.
 74. See Zajjāji, *Homāyunnāmeḥ. Nimeh-ye nokhost*, vol. 1, p. 24, v. 45; the reference is made to *Tārikh-keshvar-goshāy*. Compare ‘Ali-ābād and ‘Abbāsi, ‘Homāyunnāmeḥ’, p. 53.
 75. See, for example, Hamd-Allāh Mostowfi, *Zafarnāmeḥ*, vol. 2, f. 1,415.
 76. For a useful discussion of various forms of medieval Persian satirical poetry, see Riccardo Zippoli, *Irreverent Persia: Invective, Satirical and Burlesque Poetry from the Origins to the Timurid Period (10th to 15th Centuries)* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2015), pp. 11–33.
 77. ‘Obeyd Zākāni, *Kolleyyāt*, ed. Muhammad Ja’far Mahjub (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1999), pp. 240–1. I thank Dominic Parviz Brookshaw for kindly providing me with the scan of the relevant pages. For English translations of the poem, see Obeyd-e Zakani, *Ethics of the Aristocrats and Other Satirical Works*, ed. and transl. with an Introduction by Hasan Javadi (Washington: Mage Publishers, 2008), p. 43; Zippoli, *Irreverent Persia*, pp. 145–6.
 78. Compare Ferdowsi, *Shāhnāmeḥ*, ed. Jalāl Khāleqi-Motlaq et al. (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1366–86/1988–2008), vol. 1, p. 85, v. 386.
 79. *At’emeh* meaning ‘edibles, victuals’. For the most extensive study to date, see ‘Abd al-Ghani Mirzāyef, *Abu Eshāq va fa’āleyyat-e adabi-ye u* (Dushanbe: Dānesh, 1971). For a succinct account, see Heshmat Moayyad, ‘Boshāq-e At’ema’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 4 (1990), pp. 382–3; and Mansur Rastegār Fasāyi, ed., *Kolleyyāt-e Boshāq At’emeh-ye Shirāzi* (Tehran: Mirās-e maktub, 1382/2003), pp. 17–33, 47–51. A useful contextualised discussion of his poetry can be found in Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid–Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1998), pp. 165–70.
 80. The most recent critical edition is by Fasāyi. See Boshāq At’emeh Shirāzi, *Kolleyyāt-e Boshāq*. The famous Mirzā Habib Esfahāni produced the earliest noncritical edition of Boshāq’s *Divān* in 1302/1885–86, which he supplemented with a useful glossary of obsolete gastronomic terms, recently reprinted as *Vasf-e ta’ām. Divān-e at’emeh-ye Mowlānā Abu Eshāq-e Hallāj-e Shirāzi bar asās-e noskkeh-ye tashih shodeh-ye Mirzā Habib-e Esfahāni*, ed. Mohsen Āzarm (Tehran: Cheshmeh, 1393/2014).
 81. Boshāq At’emeh Shirāzi, *Kolleyyāt-e Boshāq*, p. 71.

82. Compare, for example, *ze-man boshnow az Kang-dez dāstān / be-d-in dāstān bāsh hamdāstān* (Ferdowsi, *Shāhnāme*, vol. 2, p. 308, n. 11, v. 14); *ze-goftār-e guyandeh dehqān-e pir / sakhon-hā hameh yek be-yek yād gir* (vol. 4, p. 374, n. 10).
83. *konun dāstān-e moza'far shenow / keh miyāvarad eshtehā-yi ze-now* (Boshāq At'emeh Shirāzi, *Kolleyyāt-e Boshāq*, p. 72).
84. *bedādand har āsh bā-ham qarār / keh mā bandeh bāshim-o u shahreyār* (ibid., pp. 72–3). Note Boshāq's intertextual borrowing from the *Shāhnāme* in the second *mesrā*; compare: *keh mā shāh-rā sar be-sar bandeh-yim* (Ferdowsi, *Shāhnāme*, vol. 4, p. 282, v. 1,738) and its variants (vol. 4, p. 186, v. 256; vol. 4, p. 290, v. 1,862, among others).
85. Boshāq At'emeh Shirāzi, *Kolleyyāt-e Boshāq*, pp. 73–74. *Yakhni* is a rich meat stew.
86. Ibid., p. 74.
87. On Korbāl as a rice-cultivating area already in the seventh/thirteenth century, see Marcel Bazin and Christopher Bromberger, 'Berenj (rice). i. In Iran', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 4 (1990), p. 148.
88. See 'Alī Akbar Dehkhodā, *Loghatnāme*, ed. Muhammad Mo'in and Ja'far Shahidi (Tehran: Mu'asseseh-ye enteshārāt va chap-e dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1372/1993), vol. 3, p. 4,241, art. 'Boghrā'. Boghrā was one of the titles of the Qarakhanid rulers – hence precise identification with a specific ruler is difficult.
89. Boshāq At'emeh Shirāzi, *Kolleyyāt-e Boshāq*, p. 76.
90. Ibid., p. 75.
91. Ibid., p. 76.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid., pp. 82–3.
94. Ibid., p. 83.
95. *to-yi pokhteh mā gondeh-yi chand khām / to-yi loqmeh-yi khās-o mā qut-e 'ām*. An alternative translation of the second *mesra* may be: 'You are the food of the elect, we are the food of the common people.'
96. Boshāq At'emeh Shirāzi, *Kolleyyāt-e Boshāq*, pp. 85–6.
97. Ibid., p. 86.
98. Ibid., p. 87.
99. The phenomenon is ably discussed in Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī*, pp. 137–48.
100. In the process, Boshāq's knowledge of ordinary life becomes manifestly evident. His depiction of Moza'far's ascent to power, as well as his portrayal of the volunteer corps' mobilisation, betrays his detailed knowledge of the realia about which he is writing. In the same way that the depiction of Moza'far's hardships mirrors the actual stages of rice cultivation – the crop being raised in soiled water, trodden upon and peeled, the details of the foods gathered for the king's army reflect the poet's familiarity with the distinguishing characteristics of local traditional cuisine. Indeed, Kerman is famous for its caraway seeds (hence the famous proverb *zireh be-Kermān bordan* – To bring caraway to Kerman). Basra is known for its fishing; Bavan for its favourable climate that promotes the cultivation of fruits.
101. This supposition might find corroboration in the fact that quite a number of poetic anthologies, collections and miscellanies (*safīneh*, *jong*, *bayāz*, or *majmu'eh*) between the eighth/fourteenth century and the second half of the ninth/fifteenth, while including excerpts from the *Shāhnāme*, do not incorporate any samples of historical or religious-historical epics. Such are, for example, Muhammad b. Badr al-Din Jājarmi's *Mo'nes al-ahrār fī daqā'eq al-ash'ār* (completed 741/1341); *Safīneh-ye Tabriz*, copied by Abu al-Majd (mostly during 721–23/1321–23) – see

- Iraj Afshār, 'Noskkeh-bargardān-e Safineh-ye Tabriz', in Meylād 'Azimi, ed., *Safineh va bayāz va jong. Maqāleh-hā-ye Iraj Afshār* (Tehran: Sokhan, 1389/2010–11), pp. 172–6; Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, 'Casing the Treasury: The Safīna-yi Tabrīz and Its Compiler', in A. A. Seyed-Gohrab and S. McGlinn, eds, *Safīna Revealed: A Compendium of Persian Literature in 14th-Century Tabriz* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2010), pp. 35–42; the miscellany of the Timurid Eskandar Mirzā (compiled 813–14/1410–11) – see Iraj Afshār, 'Fehrest-e jong-e Eskandar Mirzā Timuri', in 'Azimi, *Safineh-vo bayāz-o jong*, pp. 42–63, and others – see Meylād 'Azimi, ed., *Safineh-ye Shams-e Kāshi* (Tehran: Sokhan, 1388/2009–10), pp. 101–3.
102. It would be tempting to examine the *Dāstān-e Moza'far-o Boghrā* from a historical perspective in connection with the search for Persian identity. It seems that, by retracing the localities of Moza'far's culinary soldiers who come from Yazd, Abarquh, Baghdad, Shushtar, Kerman, Tabriz, and so on, Boshāq is mapping out territorially an idea of the Iranian realm, with Fars as its centre. The west of Iran emerges as the geographical repository of the Iranian Self, while the Turkish Other impersonated in Boghrā is centred in the east, the region of Khorasan being the most prominent. Could this territorial division reflect the state of affairs between the waning Mozaffarids (note the phonetic similarity with Moza'far!) and the ascendant Timurids? I shall explore this line of inquiry elsewhere.
 103. Several reasons can be adduced for this neglect: (1) the overwhelming majority of the texts lack scholarly editions, are available in manuscript form alone, and are dispersed in largely uncatalogued library collections; (2) their study presents scholars with linguistic and interdisciplinary challenges that call for a thorough knowledge of classical Persian, Hebrew and Arabic, and a familiarity with both Judaism and Islam – on account of its use of Hebrew characters, Shāhin's literary output was eschewed by Persian literary scholarship, while its use of Persian precluded scholars of medieval Hebrew literature from embracing it as a research subject; (3) the indebtedness of religious-epic narrative poems to classical Persian poetry demands a profound acquaintance with the elaborate poetic tradition, themes, formal structure and imagery of Persian heroic and romantic epic compositions; (4) from a linguistic viewpoint, 'classical' Judeo-Persian is perceived as substantially similar to classical Persian – since it lacks the peculiarities characteristic of early Judeo-Persian, it is deemed unworthy of serious inquiry. Scholars who have made efforts to redeem Shāhin from obscurity include W. Bacher, J. S. Asmussen, D. Blieske and, especially, A. Netzer and V. B. Moreen. For a bibliography of their scholarship, see Amnon Netzer, 'Judeo-Persian Communities of Iran. ix. Judeo-Persian Literature', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 15 (2011), pp. 153–6.
 104. On this see Amnon Netzer, 'Notes and Observations Concerning Šāhin's Birthplace', in Shaul Shaked and Amnon Netzer, eds, *Irani-Judaica IV. Studies Relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture Throughout the Ages* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1999), pp. 187–202.
 105. I follow here Amnon Netzer, *Otsar kitvei ha-yad shel yehudei Paras be-makhon Ben Zvi* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1985), pp. 27–9.
 106. For a succinct survey of both epics' contents, see Amnon Netzer, 'Ardašīr-nāma', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 2 (1987), p. 385; and 'Ezrā-nāma', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 9 (1999), p. 131. For a much more detailed exposition, see Wilhelm Bacher, *Zwei jüdisch-persische Dichter Schahin und Emrani* (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1907), vol. 1, pp. 43–62 (on the *Ardashirnāme*), pp. 66–71 (on the *Ezrānāme*). For an English translation of several sections from the

- Ardashirnāme* and *Ezrānāme*, including the episodes relating the birth of Cyrus and his granting the Jews permission to rebuild the Temple, see Vera Basch Moreen, *In Queens Esther's Garden: An Anthology of Judeo-Persian Literature* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 90–119.
107. Amnon Netzer, *Ardashirnāme*, pp. 1–20. All the references to the *Ardashirnāme* are from the unpublished and unfinished edition of the late Professor Amnon Netzer, which a team at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is preparing for publication.
 108. Netzer, *Ardashirnāme*, p. 17. Although the assertion that a book in prose is used as a basis for a poetic composition, and the reference to a friend who urges the poet to versify it, could well be a topos (see above, n. 36), the concreteness of the friend's name and provenance defies the topoi nature of the information and warrants further inquiry. As for the possible nature of this prose version, it surely could not be the Jewish Book of Esther, as it is barely conceivable that Shāhin would not have possessed it in the first place, the *Megillah* being an integral part of every Jew's 'bookcase'.
 109. Netzer, *Ardashirnāme*, pp. 21–5.
 110. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 111. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–32.
 112. *Ibid.*, pp. 36–46.
 113. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–50.
 114. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–7.
 115. *Ibid.*, pp. 203–5.
 116. From the above exposition, it is clear that, although the *Shāhnāme* was Shāhin's main source for the initial section, it was not the only one. Thus, for example, the motif of Zāl's encaging by Bahman, absent from the *Shāhnāme*, is found in the *Bahmannāme* of Irānshāh (or Irānshān) b. Abi al-Kheyr (composed between the late fifth/eleventh and early sixth/twelfth centuries) – see Irānshāh b. Abi al-Kheyr, *Bahmannāme*, ed. Rahim 'Afifi (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e 'elmi va farhangī, 1370/1991–92), p. 322, as well as in the anonymous *Mojmal al-tavārikh va al-qesas* (composed 520/1126); see also Anonymous, *Mojmal al-tavārikh va al-qesas*, p. 53. Shāhin's sources for this section deserve a separate inquiry.
 117. For discussion of Korush's representation by Shāhin, see Amnon Netzer, 'Some Notes on the Characterization of Cyrus the Great in Jewish and Judeo-Persian Writings', *Acta Iranica* 2 (1974), pp. 43–52. For additional discussion of Iranisation of biblical heroes in the two epics, see Vera Basch Moreen, 'The "Iranization" of Biblical Heroes in Judeo-Persian Epics: Shahin's *Ardashūr-nāmā* and *Ezrā-nāmā*', *Iranian Studies* 29 (1996), pp. 321–38.
 118. This description derives from the theoretical field of semiotics – especially the studies of Yuriy Lotman on the dynamic model of the semiotic system. See Y. M. Lotman, 'Dinamicheskaya model' semioticheskoy sistemy', in Lotman, *Izbrannyye stat'i* (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 90–101. It also relies on the concepts of 'polysystem' and 'literary interference' developed by Itamar Even-Zohar. See Itamar Even-Zohar, 'Literary Interference', in T. A. Sebeok, ed., *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986), vol. 1, pp. 462–3; and 'Literary System', in Sebeok, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics*, vol. 1, pp. 463–6.

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